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The Cresset (Vol. XLIV, No. 9)

Valparaiso University

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE, THE ARTS, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS / OCTOBER, 1981

THE CRESSET

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THE CRESSET *Valparaiso University Valparaiso, Indiana 46383*

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OCTOBER, 1981 Vol. XLIV, No. 9

ISSN 0011-1198

Contributors

THE CRESSET is published monthly during the academic year, September through May, by the Valparaiso University Press as a forum for scholarly writing and informed opinion. The views expressed are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the preponderance of opinion at Valparaiso University. Manuscripts should be addressed to the Editor and accompanied by return postage. Letters to the Editor for publication are subject to editing for brevity. The *Book Review Index* and the *American Humanities Index* list Cresset reviews. Second class postage paid at Valparaiso, Indiana. Regular subscription rates: one year—$6.50; two years—$11.50; single copy—$.85. Student subscription rates: one year—$3.00; single copy—$.50.

Cover Comments

Frederic Edwin Church (American 1826-1900), *Sunset, West Rock, New Haven,* oil on canvas, 14" x 19½". Valparaiso University Art Collection, Percy Sloan Bequest.

Signed, but not dated, this painting was probably created in the early 1850s as an oil study for a larger, exhibition-size version. Whether or not such a version was painted is not known, but in 1849, Church (then barely 23) received acclaim and full membership in the National Academy of Design for a 27" x 40" painting titled *West Rock, New Haven.* In that painting, the panoramic earthscape is shown at rest, in the even light of midday. *Sunset, West Rock, New Haven,* on the other hand, shows this unspoiled Eden of the New World in motion, or better, in an heroic contrast between the imperturbable land and the tumultuous heavens. Such an effect was also achieved in the oil study for Church's first masterpiece, *New England Scenery,* 1851. This masterpiece was, for Church, the "opening gun of almost three decades of cosmic landscapes," making him "the nation's 'first' landscape painter, when landscape painting was the nation's first art."

RHWB

IN LUCE TUA

Comment on Contemporary Affairs by the Editor

Ronald Reagan and the Presidency

The easiest and truest thing to say about the Reagan presidency is that it is still too early for critics to make confident judgments. The Administration has staked everything on a radical departure in economic policy, and it will be some time before we know whether supply-side prescriptions rejuvenate the nation's industrial health or turn out to be the "voodoo economics" George Bush said they were before he got religion. If his policies succeed, Reagan will go down as the most successful President of recent times. If they do not, the Republicans will sink back to the ignominy that was their customary condition before Jimmy Carter began administering the executive branch as a badly-run Sunday School.

We have no way of knowing how things will work out in substance, but we know already that President Reagan has worked a revolution in the structure of American politics. He has revived the presidential office, and that should be welcome news even to those who cannot abide his policies. We all—liberals, conservatives, or mugwumps—have a stake in a successful presidency.

It is easy to forget, in the wake of Reagan's extraordinary achievements in guiding his economic programs through Congress, how recent and widespread were the fears for the deadlock of American democracy. It had become part of the accepted wisdom to concede that no President could bring a recalcitrant and semi-anarchistic Congress into line. Political analysts warned us that in the decline of party discipline and the rise of independent legislators the old congressional dictum of "getting along by going along" had gone the way of machine politics and straight-ticket voting. Their mistake, it turned out, was to confuse political ineptitude with decay of the system. Our need was not to convert to the parliamentary model; it was to find a President who knew how to make our own system work.

Reagan has done so with a vengeance. Indeed, he has done it so well that we are beginning to hear mutterings about the return of the "imperial presidency." The idea of the imperial presidency first developed during the administration of Lyndon Johnson and was fully elaborated in the Nixon years. It was the invention of liberal academics and journalists who had traditionally supported a strong presidency but who, in reaction against Johnson's Vietnam policy and Nixon's conservative activism (well before Watergate), decided that vigorous presidential leadership constituted a threat to democracy.

As with so many discussions concerning the structure or process of government, the real issue was ideological. Liberals originally cheered strong presidents because they identified presidential leadership with progressive policies, and they only changed their minds when they discovered that conservative presidents could use firm executive action to do things that liberals did not like. (The conservative view of the strong presidency, of course, followed a reverse pattern: those on the Right remained Whigs until they learned the uses and delights of conservative initiatives in the executive branch.)

The imperial presidency was never other than a myth. American presidents have enormous power, it is true, but that power flows from the position of the United States as a superpower, not from the prerogatives of the presidential office. Indeed, compared to most chiefs of state, the American President looks weak, not strong. Prime ministers in a parliamentary system can control the legislative process is a manner that our presidents can only envy, and most presidential systems endow the chief executive with powers well beyond those held in the White House. The liberals, it seems, were right in the first place, and the country would be better off if we stopped worrying about the runaway presidency and contrived instead to make presidential authority work more effectively than it now does.

We need strong leadership to help keep our complex economy functioning and to provide coherent direction in international relations. World powers cannot proceed on the inertia principle. The Congress is constitutionally and politically incapable of leadership: our separation of powers, our bicameral legislature, and our lack of a centralized party system conspire to limit legislative authority. That leaves only the President. If he

The abortion issue has civil war potential—not literally, but in the sense that it could divide us in ways that provide no opportunity for compromise and little chance for civil conversation.

does not lead, the nation will drift—as witness the Carter presidency. We need to keep careful watch over our presidents, but that must be achieved through great care in their selection and close attention to their actions, not through a set of institutional or attitudinal impediments which operate on the assumption that we will be forever governed by knaves and fools.

All of which gets us back to Ronald Reagan. He has managed after only eight months in office to demonstrate that the system still works, that a President possessed of political skill and a sense of where he is going can still make of his office the bulliest pulpit in the land. And for that, whatever we think of his politics, we should be grateful.

The Abortion Dilemma

Politics in a democracy works best when it manages to avoid matters of first principle. Democracy requires constant rounds of negotiation, compromise, and conciliation, and those processes break down when fundamental questions come into play. We cannot—and should not—compromise on important moral principles, and so it follows that societies that do not want to tear themselves apart or to grind to a halt will do all they can to limit the occasions on which politics deals with divisive moral issues.

The American Civil War occurred when the great moral issue of slavery got translated into the political question of its extension into new territories. The country had lived with the incendiary problem of slavery only by excluding it from the political arena, and when moral and political pressures made that no longer possible, civil war was in the making. The political process came unglued when it was called upon to handle a moral issue that could no longer be ignored or set aside, that both sides defined as essential to their larger social interests, and that was so intractable as to offer no plausible middle ground on which compromise might be found.

Abortion is not now that kind of issue, primarily because it has not been defined in terms that align it with contending social forces (in the way slavery got caught up in the sectional struggle between North and South) and because there is not (yet) a critical mass of people who see it as central to the moral life of our society and who are willing to insist that it be confronted without further equivocation. But there can be little doubt that abortion has civil war potential, not in literal terms but in the sense that it could divide society along lines that provide no opportunity for conciliation and little chance even for civil conversation. For anti-abortion (pro-life) forces, the issue is quite literally one of life and death, and it is difficult to see how such people—and we include ourselves among them—can manage indefinitely to deal with the issue as if it were just one question among others. Where are the grounds for tolerance or compromise when one is persuaded that the matter comes down to a choice between life and anti-life?

Those who defend the right to abortion (pro-choice) have a number of stock arguments, but, with one exception, those arguments appear morally frivolous measured against the anti-abortionists' insistence that innocent life be protected. The pro-choice people have a defensible position only when they deny the fundamental pro-life argument that abortion means the taking of a life. Pro-choice advocates cling in desperation, as they must, to the contention that it is not life, but only potential life, that is at stake. The question of when life actually begins, they say, is a controverted one that they prefer to determine in ways that maximize a mother's (or potential mother's) freedom of decision to the last possible moment. As to when that moment occurs, they are not in agreement among themselves. Some pro-choice people would permit abortion only up to the time when the fetus takes full, recognizable human form; others would not prevent it until the creature in the womb is capable of surviving independently of the mother; still others would allow abortion all the way to the moment of birth.

The precise moment when life begins is admittedly difficult to determine (as witnessed by occasional disputes over the question among pro-lifers themselves) but most pro-choice discussion of the question seems suspiciously tainted with sophistry. The embryo and fetus represent life-in-process, and that process will normally eventuate in the emergence of a full human being by anyone's definition unless it is artificially interfered with. President Reagan has put the case simply and convincingly: in a dispute of this nature, he says, surely we ought to give the benefit of the doubt (to the extent genuine doubt exists) to the side of life. The burden of proof must rest with those who would deny life status to the unborn, and they have a most unenviable case to have to make. Yet across the country at this moment we are sanctioning the destruction of life that is fully identifiable to our sight and to our common sense as human.

The question as to the beginning of life aside, pro-choice arguments often seem exercises in the higher selfishness. Assertion of rights to privacy and to control over one's body and insistence that abortion is a personal matter in which the state has no legitimate interest

appear self-preoccupied at best when one recalls what it is that they are being weighed against. And one can but weep over the moral obtuseness of those who will argue that life has meaning and dignity only for individuals whose emotional and material security can be guaranteed before birth. Of all our liberation movements, none can be so removed from reality and from moral seriousness as that which seeks a "right to be wanted" and which suggests that those not joyously anticipated at birth must be fated to a life not worth the living.

It is sometimes suggested that pro-life people are moral fundamentalists exercised more by the sexual promiscuity that has helped increase the pressure for abortion on demand than by concern over the plight of the unborn. We suppose that there are people like that in the pro-life cause, but we cannot believe that anyone seriously believes that they are the dynamic center of the movement. The case against abortion has nothing to do with judgments concerning the sexual behavior of potential parents, although it does insist that we should all be prepared to assume responsibility for the results of our actions. In any case, social conservatism can be rallied as easily in favor of abortion as against it: we have heard it argued—though never publicly of course—that abortion ought to be encouraged as a way of holding the number of lower-class blacks in the population to manageable proportions.

We suggested at the outset that moral issues make democratic politics difficult, and we have long argued that all of us should be careful about translating our political preferences into moral necessities. Defenders of abortion pick up on these points by arguing that support of free choice is more consistent with democratic pluralism than is the pro-life position. They are right, and those of us who oppose abortion and are at the same time committed to the values of democratic society ought to recognize the tension involved in holding both these positions at once.

Yet we cannot imagine anyone possessed of moral discernment who would uphold pluralism over *all* competing values. We do not, as a society, allow each citizen to be his own moral arbiter on all questions. Where individual preferences come into conflict with the rights of others, society regularly intervenes to restrict freedom of action. If it did not, we would quickly revert to the jungle. And it is precisely in defense of life—which is what the anti-abortion movement is all about—that society is least hesitant to put limits on behavior.

It would be preferable if abortion had never become a political issue. Until quite recently, in fact, there existed a moral and legal consensus in America against it. A variety of social pressures have eroded that consensus, and in 1973 the Supreme Court, in its tragically wrongheaded and constitutionally-implausible decision in *Roe v. Wade*, made the pro-choice position the current law of the land. As with the case of slavery in the 1840s and 1850s, abortion has become, willy-nilly, a national political issue. It may or may not wind up tearing us apart. It has already rent our consciences. And, again as with slavery, we cannot for the life of us imagine a resolution to the problem that all those concerned with it can be expected to live with.

The United States and Israel

It was not so long ago that support for Israel within the United States was virtually universal. If consensus on most foreign policy issues might be elusive, it was always easy to find agreement concerning the rightness of Israel's cause and the necessity for American commitment to Israel's defense. Liberals admired the Jewish state for its experiments in democratic socialism, while conservatives were attracted to its tough-minded will to survive. And in the wake of the Nazi holocaust, everyone conceded that the cause of Jewish nationalism (Zionism) had so self-evident a basis in justice that it scarcely required formal elaboration. Things have changed considerably in recent years, however. Support for Israel is no longer automatic or anywhere near universal, and the reasons for the transformation in American attitudes bear looking into.

In the most general terms, Israel commands less sympathy and attracts more criticism than it once did because it is no longer a victim state. Although it remains a tiny Jewish island in a massive and unfriendly Arab sea, it is no longer immediately threatened with physical destruction. It has met and defeated Arab armies four times since its creation in 1948. Egypt, its potentially most dangerous military opponent, has been neutralized following Anwar Sadat's dramatic peace initiatives. To the east, Israel's control of the West Bank of the Jordan and of the Golan Heights on the border with Syria give it effective protection against surprise attack, and it is difficult in any case to imagine how any serious anti-Israeli military venture could be mounted without Egyptian participation. Terrorist attacks still threaten, of course, especially from Palestinian bases in Lebanon, but these do not raise questions of survival and Israel has shown itself entirely capable of containing the terrorist campaign.

All this being the case, we are not so inclined as we once were to conjure up images of "brave little Israel" facing an Arab Goliath and in perpetual danger of its very life. In some eyes, indeed, the imagery has been

Support for Israel has declined because we are not so inclined as we once were to conjure up images of "brave little Israel" facing an Arab Goliath and in perpetual danger of its life.

reversed: Israel is increasingly viewed as an aggressive and expansionist power that is tyrannizing the occupants of lands it seized in conquest and clings to in disregard of international law and basic justice. To not a few observers, Israel now stands on at least equal footing with the radical Arab rejectionist states as an obstacle to peace and stability in the Middle East. If the old picture of Israel and its situation contained elements of sentimentality, the new one is so distorted as to defy rational explication. Yet the possibility exists that it could be used as the basis for American policy in the area, though that possibility is presumably less likely under the Reagan Administration than it was when Jimmy Carter occupied the White House.

It is widely understood, of course, that much of the newly-critical view of Israel traces to the West's discovery of the vulnerability of its oil supply. The Arab embargo after the 1973 war and the subsequent success of the OPEC cartel in raising oil prices to astronomical heights has created throughout the oil-dependent world a new appreciation of Arab economic power and, with that, a new sensitivity to Arab concerns.

One need not be a cynic to note that concern for the plight of the Palestinian refugees has risen in direct proportion to the price of oil and the uncertainty over its future supply. The Arab nations understand completely that oil is their chief if not sole weapon, and they have used it with increasing sophistication and effectiveness to pressure the West to reconsider its attachments in the Arab-Israeli conflict. If the oil dried up, so also would much of the current anti-Israeli rhetoric.

It must be conceded that the Arab propaganda campaign has had a good deal of unwitting support from within Israel itself. Menachem Begin is an Arab press agent's dream. His intransigence, his unnecessarily belligerent rhetoric, his maudlin appeals to the tragic history of the Jews, his demagogic use of the Bible to establish an Israeli claim to the West Bank (Judaea and Samaria): all these things appall Israel's friends and delight its enemies. There can be no doubt that Israel's cause in the international community would have been immeasurably advanced had the Labor party managed to defeat Begin's coalition in the elections earlier this year.

But Begin's obduracy, however irritating, only complicates the Middle East problem; it is not the problem's essence and Begin's removal would not provide for its resolution. No Israeli government could concede what the Arabs demand: an independent Palestinian state occupying the West Bank and controlled by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Were Labor now in power in Israel, that reality would be clear and the world would not be as confused about the nature of the Middle East problem as it currently appears to be.

An Israeli Labor government would speak in more reasonable tones than Begin does and it would not make matters worse than they are by an aggressive settlement policy, but it would insist on holding on to strategic military points on the West Bank and it would not allow any Palestinian entity in the area to control its own diplomatic and military affairs. The Camp David accords called for movement toward Palestinian autonomy on the West Bank, but no one with any prospect of gaining political power in Israel interprets "autonomy" to mean that Israel would leave the Palestinians with the virtual sovereign independence that they and even their most moderate Arab allies take that term to signify. Moreover, the Arab states have continued to recognize the PLO as the only legitimate voice of the Palestinian people, and Israelis of all political persuasions are naturally reluctant to see established on their border a government controlled by those who have committed themselves—over and over again and without possibility of misinterpretation—to the elimination of the Jewish state.

We are often told that political rhetoric in the Middle East must be discounted heavily and that Arab politicians, even more than most of their profession, should not be understood as meaning what they say. It is certainly true that conservative Arab leaders, including the rulers of such key states as Jordan and Saudi Arabia, have little more affection for the PLO than Israel does and that they would prefer that the Palestinian cause be in less fanatical hands than it is. It is even possible that the PLO could learn over time to accept, if not officially recognize, the existence of Israel.

But rhetoric quite aside, certain political realities remain. Public opinion in the Arab countries is such that Jordan and Saudi Arabia refused to become part of the Camp David process or recognize its results because they feared that PLO reaction to such actions could create dangerous instability within their own countries. Whatever they may think in private, they cannot risk public disagreement with Yasser Arafat. And the PLO, despite eternal sightings to the contrary by friends of the Arab cause, has never displayed any attitude toward Israel other than that it must be destroyed.

All of which means that the American State Department's unwearying pursuit of a "comprehensive settlement" for the Middle East dilemma keeps running head on into a basic contradiction: America is committed to the defense of Israel, and the defense of Israel is incompatible with the minimum demands of the Arab nations. Even President Sadat, whose vision and courage cannot be too highly praised, seems attached to a definition of Palestinian West Bank autonomy that the great majority of Israelis cannot reconcile with their basic security needs. Those who insist on recognition of

We should not expect Israel to take more "risks for peace" than we would in Israel's place.

the "just rights of the Palestinian people" as the key to the solution of the crisis in the Middle East seem not to understand that the Arab interpretation of those rights is one that would jeopardize the existence of America's most committed friend in the region.

Peace in the Middle East can only be pursued on an incremental basis, as Henry Kissinger, in opposition to the State Department professionals, understood. The dream of a comprehensive settlement reflects the customary impatience of American diplomacy as well as its persistent illusion that given sufficient energy and good will any problem will yield a solution. Some problems, unfortunately, can only be lived with, at least in the near term. Given the tenacity of Arab views, American insistence on a general settlement only results in excessive pressure on Israel. Israel has little choice but to make all the concessions it can to American demands, but it will not endanger its existence simply in order that America might have more congenial relations with the conservative OPEC states in the area.

Those who think that American access to Middle Eastern oil depends on or could be assured by settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict misunderstand the nature of the oil producers' self-interest and the causes of Middle East instability. Peace between Israel and its neighbors is desirable for its own sake, but it will not end the myriad divisions between the Middle Eastern states (indeed, their common antipathy to Israel is one of the few things that unites them) and it will not bring down the price of oil or insure its continued supply. It is economic self-interest, and not the state of Arab-Israeli relations, that will dictate the policies of the Middle East oil producers.

A continued commitment to the defense of Israel as the first priority of American policy in the Middle East in no way suggests that Israel should hold a veto over American actions. Close relations with Saudi Arabia and Jordan—and the survival of the conservative regimes in those countries—are vital to American interests for a variety of reasons, and we should not be reluctant to further such relations through, for example, the sale of military supplies. Access to American weaponry will not make the Jordanians or the Saudis military threats to Israel, a point that even Prime Minister Begin no doubt understands, even if he cannot say so out loud. As long as all parties in the area understand that the American commitment to Israel is not negotiable, then virtually all other things can be.

But that commitment, the forsaking of which would damage our interests as well as our honor, must include the understanding that we will not force Israel to take more "risks for peace" than we or any other prudential nation could be expected to take were we in Israel's place.

The Woman at the Well

John 3:4-42

She went at noon when dry heat fell into
her bucket like a somber weight. No one
came near. The other women, with a shrew
upon each tongue, were baking bread for son

or husband. Only she, mid-day alone
was there to meet a stranger. And a Jew.
He asked: "Water? a drink?" She stared. Light shone
his eyes. At once, all she ever knew,

had done, dreamed, hoped, seemed to leave
her dark and move into the light that he
created. *Who could he be?* "Receive,"
her bones sang. "Take," flesh cried. "O make me free."

She ran into the town. "Come. Come and see.
The well is full of light. Drink light with me."

Sister Maura

Night Walk: Japanese Countryside

Frogs are croaking. Hear
the harsh, sweet sound of summer
courting the pale moon,
watch seedlings of rice slowly
rise from wet fields to listen

Sister Maura

Teachers on Teaching

Reflections on a Fugitive Art

For teachers, few things satisfy like a well-taught class. Yet, our talk about teaching is less predictable: depending on where the barometer hovers or the sunlight slants, it can be crisp and cheerful or quite depressingly gray. Our solitary *musings about the state of the art can be more confusing still. But surely the most difficult of all, even agonizing, is to try to write about teaching.*

I am usually a compassionate human being, yet on two separate occasions this summer, I deliberately required of some thirty of my colleagues that they agonize, that they actually write about teaching. As part of the workshop for teachers of the Freshman Seminar, a new program at Valparaiso University this year, I gave a series of sessions on writing, using the techniques Peter Elbow presents in Writing Without Teachers *and* Writing With Power. *Elbow's method emphasizes that the writer must generate ideas and words abundantly before he starts to shape and polish them, that any piece of writing must go through stages of generation, summary, feedback, shaping, and revision before it is "finished." Since I felt that merely to talk about this process and present it as a theory would reduce its dynamic possibilities, I asked my colleagues to produce a piece of writing by the end of the four-day session; and because I hoped the writing would stimulate some good conversation, I specified that they write about teaching. They groaned, announced I was impossible, swore they felt just like freshmen again, then set to work with amazing good will and even some energy.*

The pieces that follow are some of those we wrote during those four packed days, pieces written to a specific assignment, under pressure, and with little time for revision. What strikes me most about them as a group is their diversity—of idea, attitude, style, mode . . . and mood. Some question, wonder, propose, come to no conclusions; others state, extend, oppose, arrive. Some stimulate, some define, some demythologize. Yet all share a conviction I find hopeful: teaching—whatever it is, however we come to discover it—is worth doing, worth trying to do well.

Kathleen Mullen

The Accidental Teacher

College teaching is a distinctly non-professional profession. A physician learns to diagnose and treat illnesses; an accountant learns to keep accounts; but a college teacher is not taught to teach. This curious situation bears some explanation.

Teachers teach a subject: biology, language, mechanical engineering, and it is the subject itself that is the initial source of attraction to the person who eventually becomes a college professor. The high school student who is intrigued with mathematics may make that subject his college major. If his desire to expand his knowledge of this discipline persists, graduate school is a logical next step. From graduate study many of his colleagues go on to employment in research and industry where their work consists of the application of what they have learned. Their very learning contains the skills required for their job. Our student, however, elects college teaching as his profession. He is hired on the basis of his mastery of the subject. The skill required for his job is not contained in his learning, for he is to communicate his knowledge to college students. He is in effect ready for war but not armed for the battle.

It is remarkable that under these circumstances much excellent teaching evolves. Enthusiasm, dedication, persistence are responsible for the success of many professors, who continually seek to improve the methods by which they spur students to learn. The lack of the aforementioned qualities is also responsible for many non-productive classroom hours.

Doubtless college teachers do not consider themselves non-professionals, for they know themselves to be highly skilled in their disciplines. Some are never aware that unrealistic demands are made of them and that students expect much more of them than they have been prepared to deliver. College teaching is, in reality, an accidental profession.

Frustrations and Mysteries

I don't think I ever seriously wanted to do anything except teach. I was the classic A-student, happier in school than any place else. Naturally, therefore, doing "school things" seemed right and good. I enjoyed thinking, reading, encountering new ideas, writing, interpreting, learning. And, naively I suppose, I imagined

A teacher's nightmare: In the dream class I arrive unprepared. I wear only ragged underwear or no clothes at all. As the students howl, I crawl miles toward a door that I can never find.

that most students enjoyed being students as much as I did. Therefore, I expected teaching to be a sharing of the things I loved with others who wanted to love them too. I still believe that such sharing comes as close to the essence of teaching as anything does, but I have come—through frustration and failure—to realize that sharing is the second stage of teaching rather than the first. Kindling the desire to love intellectual things is necessarily the first, and how to do that is the "mystery" at the heart of teaching. One's own enthusiasm for one's subject matter is not enough; competence in that subject is not enough; a liking for young people is not enough. Even all three together do not necessarily build a bridge between teacher and student. But unless that bridge is built, no real teaching, no real sharing can occur.

Night Classes

Teaching by day holds no terror for me; I feel comfortable in classes. After all, I teach teaching. However, all the calm is destroyed at night, in dreams. Freud and Jung have offered interpretations for most dreams. Mine are no doubt superficial in their analysis; the threats, fears, and anxieties are obvious.

In the dream class I arrive unprepared in every way. Usually I wear only ragged underwear or no clothes at all. To the derisive howls of a crowded lecture hall, I must crawl miles toward a door which I can never find. On better occasions when I am clothed and stay to begin the class, the students are not mine at all. I have the wrong class list. These students are in pre-med or computer science. The Registrar never discovers (much less rectifies) the error. So I lecture to a group which finds my thesis banal and irrelevant. Occasionally the students can control their dissatisfaction no longer. Masses of faceless figures from the darkened hall throng forward. They surge around me to claw at my throat or to grab my arms. During the worst such incident, a hulking thug pushed me against the blackboard where he dismembered me with a jagged piece of tin.

By day I invite neophytes to join me in the joys of teaching, but I also teach night classes.

Teacher as Actor and Actor as Teacher

Most people would likely accept the familiar image of teacher as performing artist, but how about the obverse—performer (in this case actor) as teacher? How does a would-be teacher prepare for his career? He studies his chosen field, acquires a theory or discipline of classroom technique, and tries (with varying success) to impart some of that knowledge to others, to share his skill, his knowledge, and his excitement with others in a classroom. Isn't this precisely the situation of an actor? He too must acquire certain skills, discipline, and knowledge. Once acquired, his art cannot live in a vacuum, but must be shared with others. The actor takes his skill, his knowledge, his excitement and transmutes it into an act of creation or recreation, sharing it with an audience. In both cases (teacher and actor) the performer tries to reveal his "vision" to an audience: perhaps a vision of how a political system works, how a poet interprets the world around him, how a human being reacts in given circumstances. Both actor and teacher are essentially role players, both fulfilling a similar function—one of basic communication.

The classical theory of art insists that its dual purpose is instruction and delight. How better can we describe the purpose of both teacher and actor? Perhaps the greatest difference is that the teacher must be more subtle in his acting and the actor more subtle in his teaching.

Teachers and Learners

"Teaching" and its noun "teacher" are useless and misleading words and can, should be, dropped from the vocabulary. The concepts of "learning" and "learner" are much more important and relate to the educational process better. If the term teacher has to be used, or teaching for that matter, the implication must always be that these suggest advanced states of learning. Human beings, the gregarious animals, must always share what they have learned, and society has this communication organized in many different modes of information transfer—the newspapers, radio, local gossip, etc. So my thought, then, is that all learners are constantly imparting information they know to other learners who do not share this information. It is more consistent in my experience, as an advanced learner, to point out to my students that we are learning together—they at their level and I at mine. If I go through one of my undergraduate courses as advanced learner without the satisfaction of having learned more of my subject than I knew before, I am markedly disappointed, even frustrated, usually not with the course content but with the environment, the institution, or whatever. If teachers, perpetual students, could convince their erstwhile students that learning is a track or path of different heights through a lifetime and not a stratified hierarchy of class periods, courses, credits, and degrees, learning could be separated from teaching and even teachers.

For a teacher to consider his work as a job, not a way of life, suggests the recognition of a healthy separation between his private life and the demands of his profession.

High Ideals, Catchpenny Realities

The participle form *teaching* connotes the ongoing energy necessary to that professional activity. I am reminded of the -ing end rhyme in Hopkins' sonnet "The Windhover." Too often, though, that ideal intellectual and emotional excitement floats belly up in the backwash of committees peopled by unhappy, carping, insistent colleagues; beaches itself on the chafing necessity of grading more papers than seems possible; dissolves in heat and grit of conferences demanding patience when what I want is to sleep, scream, or just go away. Richard Wilbur says, rightly, that we need someone "to shake our gravity up!" But I don't like the suggestion that the creative energy of teaching is only a temporary gimmick. I am willing to live for moments, but I hope they may be made possible by—not exist in spite of—the routine commitments and careful planning of my everyday patterns.

Teaching the freshman seminar will revitalize me because it demands of me what all of us should insist of ourselves: that we willingly risk failure in attempting new methods and reexamining long-held assumptions about students. The workshop reminds me that I must recall that strange mixture I was at 17—fearful, shy, stubborn, narrow, eager to be an adult. Teaching requires sympathy, mastery of subject, style, a willingness to admit ignorances and the courage to address them, cooperation with colleagues.

Teaching Considered as a Job

While teaching may be a noble profession, it is not a way of life. A myth suggests that teachers, like the clergy, are an especially dedicated lot. They do not take jobs; rather, they respond to a calling. As a result, many believe that teachers are not, or at least should not be, overly concerned about salary, demands on time, or even conditions of employment. For a teacher deliberately to protect his individual interest is to cast doubt on the quality of his professional dedication. Consequently, when normal private concerns clash with institutional expectations, teachers often suffer discomfort and even guilt.

I believe that many teachers would be more fulfilled and perhaps even more effective if they would see their profession as a job, not as a mere job or as only a job, but as employment that is clearly distinguished from a way of life. To place restrictions upon a teacher's professional commitment does not reduce the quality of that commitment. It only makes it more manageable. For a teacher to consider his work as a job suggests the recognition of a healthy separation between his private life and the demands of his profession. The establishment of a demarcation between the two helps to legitimize both.

Variations on a Participial Theme

I remind myself as I "finish" this exercise that I am one of Kenneth Burke's symbol-making, symbol-using, symbol-abusing animals. Like one of Burke's animals, I am sitting on a narrow precipice—in this instance Peter Elbow's unstructured-free-writing principles but more like Peter's elbow—nervously writing. And like Burke's animal, I am "rotten with perfection." The predicament makes me uncomfortable but relatively at ease in a small community of scholars and teachers writing and talking about teaching.

What shall I do as I write about teaching? I am too old to dig ditches. I am ashamed to beg for time from my teacher. I think I shall make friends with the friends of the mammon of unrighteousness so that some day I may hopefully be received into the kingdom of heavenly teachers. That is, I will presume that teaching is probably an acceptable "ing" word. As a participle form of the word—if the word is not infinite in its possible combinations, the word is indeterminate in relating subjects to objects—the word arrests the act of teaching in a perpetual present. I am provisionally grateful for this lie in everyday language. It makes it possible to define teaching in terms of other participle forms of the verb which, as nouns, momentarily arrest the present.

Thus teaching is like "conating," like "dauncing," like loving, like fathering, like waiting. Teaching is like "conating," because, if you are as puzzled by this word as I was when I first ran across it in Lucky's speeches in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, you recognize that Beckett probably wanted to take this word from Leibnitz, who got it from a Latin noun, *conationem* (endeavor), and Beckett wanted to appropriate the word to our modern condition: perpetual striving, eternal desiring. And that, it would seem, is the scene in which teaching takes place.

Like T. S. Eliot's deliberately archaic use of the word "dauncing" in *The Four Quartets*, teaching is like dancing. Teaching is an ancient call to participate in an anonymous and joyful vocation. We dance as teachers in a living circle. Whenever I was really depressed as a graduate student from the despair and melancholy of books, I would take out a *History of Cambridge University* and study the names and brief lives of the teachers listed there for some eight centuries. Now I take comfort

Teaching is like waiting. It depends so much on who we are and what we are hoping for that teaching places us in the perpetual hope and despair of the thieves on the cross.

in W. H. Auden's retort to a student who asked for whom Auden wrote his poetry: "Young man, my audience has been dead for years." But dancing, like "dauncing," offers moments even in the classroom when blood, bone, and intellect run together in a full circle of human beings chanting their general hymns to the sun.

Like loving, teaching is courting and being married. Like courting, teaching holds the promise of beautiful consummation even though its reality is probably retrospective disappointment and its hope the maxim that failure teaches and forgiveness gives us a new start. Like being married, teaching becomes loving duty when romantic enthusiasm begins to slip away.

Like fathering, teaching seems to require gentle weaning and disinterested support as the student moves from our attempts to be transparent to subject matters and disciplines to the student's own proportionate understanding and mastery of human knowledge, skill, and wisdom. Knowing when to grasp, when to let go of the student in relationship to subject matter and arts seems to require more grace than art.

Teaching is like waiting. It depends so much on who we are and what we are hoping for that teaching places us in the perpetual hope and despair of the thieves on the cross. We cannot presume, for one of the thieves was damned. We need not despair, one of the thieves was saved.

Finding Other Voices

I like to read aloud in voices that other people make possible for me. Sometimes they are poets, sometimes story-tellers, sometimes writers of Biblical passages that must have been spoken aloud from the beginning. I like to share their voices, not because I mind being me, but because, when I add their voices to the ones I am able to form for myself, I become a more inclusive person and the world around grows, too, and becomes more exciting and intriguing.

There are signs that some students share in the same pleasure. A few of them read in chapel as though some part of an Epistle were directed especially to their part of the world or as though they had entered into the mind of Paul or Peter or John. It is not a frequent thing, to be counted on at 10:15 on a weekday morning, but it stands as a sign of what is possible. What open, thankful, witty, yet serious people they seem to be! And I believe that something like what happens to them could happen more commonly.

But how can we take on the voices of others before we sense what we sound like when we speak from the habits and resources long established within us? And if we have not yet learned to recognize our own voices, is not "feedback," as Peter Elbow conceives of it, a way of aiding that recognition without destroying us? Feedback in Elbow's scheme is directed to authors who have just read aloud from their own work and includes such responses as pinpointing vivid or dull words, describing the writers' apparent attitudes toward other people, and comparing tone and rhythm to animals, styles of walking, or colors and odors.

Such feedback can give us signs of what is appealing and in other ways attention-getting about our speech and writing. At the same time it allows us to form images of just how we are limited in our prevailing ways of presenting ourselves. How better teach someone to enjoy having a voice—if he is not yet old enough to have a two-year-old to read to? How better lead someone to the threshold where you open the possibility: His tongue, too, can speak with other voices, strangely muffled before on printed pages, waiting to be set loose and to set the reader's perspective loose in expansion.

Thwarting the Wicked Witch

Most of the time I don't remember my dreams, but I did last night, for the first time in fact since last freshman seminar workshop. Then I had dreamed about sculpting, making out of wax and nuts and bolts an image which seemed human. I had felt proud and protective of it, had recognized it as something which, however unwieldy, was validly part of myself, "my work." Last night's dream was far more confusing and ultimately quite disturbing. Again, I found myself performing, although now by constraint rather than by choice. I dreamed I had gone to the theatre to see a mime show and had deliberately taken seats close in, in the second row. When the curtains opened, however, a children's play was being performed. The main character was a wicked witch, like the figure from Hansel and Gretel, with flyaway hair, a black cape, a screechy cackle. The story itself was not clear to me, but something else was plain, all too quickly: I was expected to take a role in the play, hauled up on stage at the witch's directions and given some lines to read. I'm not sure why I stayed there or what my part was to be, but there I was, in front of thousands of people. I know that I deliberately misread my lines (whatever they were), much to the consternation of the witch. I know too that I was *right* to do so, that the audience was with me, that all would have been well except that my dog ran away and I woke up shouting "Mac! Mac!" up and down the streets.

Since images of teaching as a performing art have been dominating my conscious thinking over the past

few days, I shouldn't be surprised at these dreams, but to find their meaning, or at least their relevance, is a more difficult matter. What strikes me most in this second dream is its frightening manipulative quality, its randomness. The first dream's serenity is gone; no deliberate, consciously taken decision moves me to perform/teach. Instead, I find myself catapulted onto a stage I have not chosen, before people I do not know, by the will of a figure I consciously reject and fear. There is no sense of "what the play is about," nor is my function as performer clear. Subversion, in fact, seems my main contribution: not to carry out the designs of the witch, almost certainly nefarious; to perform, instead—"winging it," to the tune of my own intuition, inventing as I go. Shades of the *commedia dell'arte*, yet! Bold as I've made myself sound now, though, I can't deny my fear of such performance: could the witch, after all, have stolen my dog?

Whatever the sum of it all, I'm glad to be awake. But I'm glad, too, for this slant insight into my waking world, and glad most of all that I'm learning to learn from these juxtapositions, what Wallace Stevens calls "incessant conjunctionings" between my asleep and wakeful truths.

Teaching as a Function of Personality

Good teaching is what good teachers do, and they do different things. Since teaching is essentially a function of personality, there exist as many forms of good teaching as there exist types of personality. Some teachers work best in unstructured situations and inspire students by their openness, spontaneity, and ability to generate ideas. Other teachers require a more controlled environment, with fixed pattern and structure. They inspire students by their thoroughness, organization, and coherence. No teacher can teach well in opposition to the dictates of his personality. He must feel at ease in the teaching situation, and if he is trying to operate in a manner contrary to his personality structure, he will become self-conscious and false. In teaching as in love-making, self-consciousness can only end in disaster. The good teacher is always caught up in the substance of what is being taught, not in the manner of its presentation. To become preoccupied with technique rather than substance is to render impossible serious intellectual exchange. The best classroom experiences are those in which the instructor loses himself in the excitement of his subject, yet still manages to communicate that excitement in a disciplined and coherent manner. In such situations, the technique takes care of itself.

Translations from the Latin

On the Bloody Sweat

Your blood so joyed to be poured out for sin,
You could not keep one drop of it within.

George Herbert (1593-1633)

Beneath the Cross, Magdalene Weeps

"I thirst!" There is no water in this stone.
Streams flow from your eyes though; drink there alone.

Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski (1595-1640)

Matthew *6:34 Take no thought for tomorrow*

Go, wretch; waste your time worrying, and be
Undone by unborn evils continually.
One day's own tears are wet enough for me.
One day's enough; I feel its long hours harrow.
I have no time to wait each coming sorrow,
Nor be the wretch today I'll be tomorrow.

Acts *9:3 On Saul blinded*

What are these shades of light? this night of day?
The shadow of this brightness, a new night!
Though whether Saul was blind, I cannot say;
I know that Saul was *captured by the light.*

Richard Crashaw (1612-1649)

R. L. Barth

Anti-Americanism in Canada

Why Best Friends are Sometimes Intimate Enemies

Donald Swainson

Canada originated as a pre-revolutionary and counter-revolutionary society.

The earliest major unit in the British North American colonies that were federated into Canada in 1867 was Quebec. Acquired by conquest in 1759, French Canada was insulated from the ferment that transformed France into western Europe's first truly revolutionary society late in the eighteenth century. The British gave substantial latitude to the residuary leadership of the French Canadians. Priests and seigneurs dominated the little society that straddled the St. Lawrence from Vaudreuil to Gaspé. They were conservative leaders, and helped to keep Quebec a profoundly conservative society.

The French Canadians stood like a rock against the American revolutionaries, who occupied Montreal and in 1776 dispatched Benjamin Franklin to convince them that their proper future lay with the Revolution. Franklin's efforts were to no avail: the well-meaning Americans came as liberators and left as oppressors. French Canadians remained British, conservative, Catholic, and anti-democratic.

Their reaction to revolution in France was perhaps even stronger. They were appalled by their motherland's lunge into lawlessness and violence. Attacks on Christianity in general and Roman Catholicism in particular infuriated the pious Canadians. The Conquest severed French Canada from France. Thus American and French revolutions were consciously rejected. They served only to strengthen the leadership and social structure of the old regime.

Parts of English Canada pre-date the American Revolution, and the tidewater colony of Nova Scotia rejected revolutionary overtures from the south. But the real origin of English Canada is the American Revolution. Ontario and New Brunswick were founded by loyalists who fled revolutionary America. Substantial numbers of loyalists also settled in Nova Scotia and Quebec. The precise nature of loyalism is a matter of some dispute. Indeed, the scholarly debate over loyalists and loyalism wages hot and heavy; loyalist ideology is analysed endlessly and loyalism's origins probed whenever evidence permits. (Loyalist scholarship is a major growth industry.) While it is not easy to be definitive about the nature and influence of the loyalists, we can be firm on one point. They were opposed to revolution and saw the emergent United States of America as a hostile and dangerous force in North America and the world.

America as a Revolutionary Threat

It is hardly surprising that early-nineteenth-century Canada was anti-American. The United States was a major revolutionary power dedicated to democracy and egalitarianism, or mob rule and lawlessness in the eyes of Canadian leaders. The new republic represented an ideology at odds with the ideas of English and French Canadian leaders, who villified and mocked Americans. Perhaps even more important, the United States represented a military threat to Canada. Relations between Britain and her ex-colonies were hardly warm, and they cooled appreciably during the long war that Great Britain fought with revolutionary and Napoleonic France. Canadians supported Britain and feared that an Anglo-American war would be fought on Canadian soil. That is precisely what happened during the War of 1812: Canada was invaded by American forces.

The war did not amount to much as a military exercise, but its political and ideological fall-out was of long-term importance. The War of 1812 "blooded" Canadian nationalism. Our soil had been occupied by foreigners. We had some genuine martyrs, especially Sir Isaac Brock. Canadian citizens had rallied to the militia, or so it was erroneously alleged, and driven out the enemy. The War of 1812 is a watershed in Canadian history. It confirmed Canada as a garrison state, and the job of the garrison was to defend Canadian society from the

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crazed democratic mobs to the south. Anti-Americanism was the official ideology of the British North America that emerged from the last Anglo-American war.

This founding version of Canadian anti-Americanism was fed on a rich diet during the half-century that followed the War of 1812. Internally, Canada was governed by imperial officials who were heavily influenced by conservative oligarchies known as the Family Compact in Ontario and the Chateau Clique in Quebec. The oligarchs were ideologically committed to what they perceived to be the British way. They continued to see America as a revolutionary threat, and their views were strengthened by political opposition that became important during the 1830s. Canada's first serious radicals saw the United States as a model society. They drew many of their ideas and much of their rhetoric from the American radical tradition. The oligarchs saw radical Canadians as an American fifth column, and equated radicalism with republicanism. They drew upon our rich anti-American heritage to fight the radicals. Loyalty, monarchism, conservatism, and anti-Americanism were made synonymous terms.

The Rejection of Republicanism

When Quebec and Ontario radicals rebelled in 1837, they fanned the flames of anti-Americanism. William Lyon Mackenzie and Louis Joseph Papineau, the rebel leaders, would have set up little republics that could never have survived. In defeat they fled to the United States where they were given men, guns, and money. Everything that the oligarchs had said for a generation about rebels and Americans seemed true. Canadian rebels in exile joined forces with American freedom-fighters in 1838 and threatened to invade Canada. A few incursions actually took place. As in 1775-76 and 1812-14 the invaders came as liberators, but were regarded as oppressors. They strengthened Canadian nationalism and confirmed the intimate connection between patriotism and anti-Americanism. In an editorial published in 1838, the Kingston *Chronicle* summed up much Canadian sentiment: "We say to the Americans we have been in daily intercourse with you, we have even entwined ourselves with you by numerous family connections; . . . we have witnessed with pleasure your prosperity; . . . but we never asked your aid, we never wished your help, to detach us from the mother country, to take from us the British Constitution, and to institute for it a republic; we tell you, and we say it advisedly, that nine-tenths of our population prefer the form of government we have to yours; we tell you that we are not an ill-governed or oppressed people, we are almost wholly free from taxation, we enjoy full, free and perfect liberty."

The Oregon crisis in the mid-1840s and the American Civil War kept the pot boiling. The chance of another Anglo-American war—and such a war almost came several times during the 1840s and 1860s—continued to feed anti-Americanism. Confederation in 1867 can be seen as a step designed to consolidate British America against a post-Civil War United States that might decide to settle scores with Britain by annexing the colonies to the north. Such fears were exaggerated, but real and influential all the same.

During the century that preceded confederation a primitive form of Canadian anti-Americanism is easy to understand and explain. It would have been inexplicable had such sentiment not been widespread. In the century and more since confederation, anti-Americanism has persisted, but the phenomenon is more complex and subtle.

Both Canada and the United States underwent massive change in the decades that followed the 1860s. They became urbanized and industrialized nations. The ethnic mix changed as millions of Europeans were added to the original population components. The United States terminated its role as a revolutionary republic and became a stabilizing conservative influence in alliance with the United Kingdom and Canada. For its part, Canada outgrew the paranoid Toryism of the early nineteenth century. We acquired full self-government and evolved into a liberal democratic nation-state. Canadian leaders eagerly accepted Anglo-American détente and supplemented it with Canadian-American bilateral pacts. The Ogdensberg Declaration of 1940 indicated clearly that the governments of the United States and Canada viewed continental defense as an integrated proposition that should be undertaken jointly. The two countries were close allies during World War I, World War II, and in Korea. In short, our interests came to concur and our ideological differences melted into nuances of a common theme. In the early nineteenth century, British North Americans knew what differentiated them from Americans, and were willing (and occasionally anxious) to use the gun to preserve that distinctive way of life and thinking. A hundred years later Canadians were locked into our now omnipresent intellectual parlor game: debating the nature of the "Canadian identity." What is a Canadian? Above all, what makes him different from an American?

One might think that these structural changes in Canadian thinking and society, especially when combined with the existence of a close Anglo-American-Canadian alliance, would mute the anti-Americanism that was so prevalent in pre-confederation Canada. At one level it has; anti-Americanism is no longer the official theology of the Canadian state. At other levels anti-

Canadian nationalism began as a conservative impulse but has now come full circle and is largely the property of putative revolutionaries who loathe conservative America, home of world capitalism.

Americanism flourishes and takes on an endless variety of forms and colors. Many reasons, which often intertwine, explain the vibrancy of the anti-American cult.

First, of course, is cultural inertia. The old anti-Americanism of the Family Compact Tories has become part of the political culture of certain groups of Canadian conservatives. They continue to believe that Canada is (or should be) British, Protestant-dominated, and organically Tory. Those aspects of modern Canada that deviate from these mythical norms they attribute to the influence of America and her Canadian henchmen. The fifth column is the Liberal party that has governed Canada for most of this century. Liberalism is equated with Americanization and is seen as a solvent that will dissolve everything that is valuable and distinctively Canadian. Many of those in this school are academics and writers who see Canada's salvation in an alliance of conservatives and socialists, who share a common opposition to American and Canadian liberalism. This line of thought might be half-baked, but is nonetheless popular with students, intellectuals, and some Conservative and New Democratic party activists. It provides for anti-Americanism a veneer of intellectual and social respectability.

A cruder variant of this old-fashioned anti-Americanism also exists. This approach simply takes the rhetoric of a hundred years ago and applies it without acknowledgement of any change in the intervening decades. Comparative evidence is ignored. Hence we are told that the United States is susceptible to mob rule. That is why the United States is more violent and corrupt than Canada. Canadians are more willing to accept authority than Americans, which leads to a more civilized society in which *real* freedom is more entrenched. Endless points are based on this theme, but one is used more than any other. Almost any such argument will eventually include conclusive evidence: Americans elect judges; Canadians do not. Election implies mob rule and corruption, while Canadian judges, who are appointed by the crown (or in reality by the federal Liberal party), are independent and beyond reproach.

Canadian dislike of the United States also emanates from what might be called the critical mass factor. Twentieth-century America is so big, powerful, and omnipresent that it cannot help but impinge on Canadian interests and autonomy. When this happens, Canadians often respond with knee-jerk anti-Americanism. A cultural reflex action takes the place of reasoned debate. Almost any Canadian will occasionally find himself anti-American in this way. He will see U.S. tariffs, fishing policy, irrigation schemes on international waters, ownership of Canadian oil companies, or attempts to impose domestic laws abroad as plots against Canadian integrity. The Canadian will draw upon his rich anti-American tradition to express his irritation.

Americans who live in Canada are often surprised and upset by these outbursts, because they can come from people who are normally calm and reasonable. It is difficult for Americans to understand the extent to which a huge society like theirs can limit and define the activities of a small neighbor, even when no ill will is intended. T. C. Douglas, late Co-operative Commonwealth Federation premier of Saskatchewan, put it well when he compared Canadian-American relations to a mouse sleeping beside an elephant. The elephant might mean no harm when he rolls over in his sleep, but in the process he can develop in the mouse a powerful dislike of elephants.

Canadianism as Non-Americanism

Cultural nationalism also generates vast quantities of ill will. Canadian debates about identity tend to focus on those aspects of Canadianism that are not American. When such differences are found it is tempting to make them a virtue, which automatically casts a pejorative light on things American. Our Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is heavily subsidized by the federal government, and a key corporate mission of the C.B.C. is to nurture Canadian talent. This is all well and good, but the other side of the coin is free-enterprise radio and television in the United States, which in comparison becomes crass and materialistic. Subsidized TV drama is not as dependent on public support as free-enterprise drama, so American television is faulted as vulgar and exploitative of sex and violence. Canadian publishing, also heavily subsidized, finds it increasingly difficult to survive. The enemy? American books and magazines that appeal to a low common denominator and have little redeeming cultural significance. These attitudes and assumptions feed and confirm older stereotypes. Canadians are more public-spirited than Americans, and find it easier to act collectively. We are less violent, materialistic, and exploitative. Our refusal (or inability) to provide mass culture reveals again our resistence to the mob and our preference for order and authority.

Perhaps the most interesting anti-American variant remains ideological. Our anti-Americanism began with conservatives who loathed revolutionary America. We have now come full circle, and have an abundance of putative revolutionaries who loathe conservative America. Old-fashioned social democrats are anti-capitalist and dislike America, which is the center of world capitalism. However, these people, including a large number of successful parliamentarians, are not particularly strident. The shrill sector comes from the far left, a group that has no parliamentarians but many tenured professors. For them the United States is the enemy.

Anti-Americansim is rooted in the structure of Canadian society and it will not disappear.

Republicans are fascists; American foreign policy is an imperialist plot; multinational corporations are agencies of evil and the State Department.

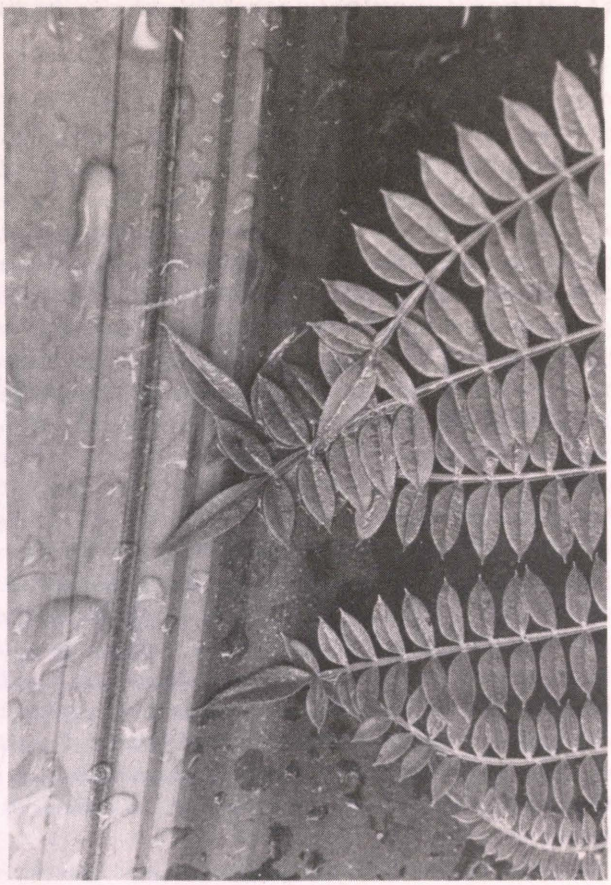
Canada, in this view, can be independent only after undergoing a major social revolution. Until then we are a branch-plant country in every way. We must also identify with the oppressed throughout the world: blacks, Indians, nursing mothers in underdeveloped countries, the exploited workers of the third world, and French Canadians. Even seals and whales get press from time to time. The argument is carried on in every faculty common room in Canada. Undergraduates and journalists join in to fight predatory American imperialism.

Inevitable Friends, Inevitable Tensions

The intriguing aspect of these anti-Americans is the extent to which they are the product of America itself. Many were educated in American universities and have been joined here by some who left the United States during the Viet Nam war. Their issues are often American issues. They opposed the war in Viet Nam (in which Canada did not fight); they agitate against American involvement in El Salvador (in which Canadian interests are hardly involved); they are apoplectic over the popularity of Ronald Reagan (which might be seen as a domestic affair for Americans). In fact, this group might be seen as the ultimate example of American power in Canada. Even our anti-Americanism cannot escape the pervasive influence of the United States of America.

Anti-Americanism has been part of Canadian life from the beginning. It manifests itself in surprising formats that come in an endless supply. This is not going to change because the attitudes it represents are rooted in the structure of Canadian society and this country's place in North America.

At the same time, Americans should not allow Canadian anti-Americanism to cloud their view of the relationship between the two countries. Canadians are tied to the United States in intimate ways. Each is the other's major trading partner. We are military allies and have for years cooperated closely in international affairs. Our families often have an American branch, and we visit the United States constantly to ski, enjoy the warmth of the south, watch baseball, attend cultural events, go to conventions, and just travel about. This closeness explains as much friction and anti-Americanism as anything else. Robert Norman Thompson, leader of our federal Social Credit party during the 1960s, inadvertently explained much about both pro-American and anti-American sentiment in Canada when he said in the House of Commons: "The United States is our friend whether we like it or not."



Preferences

I would prefer to be
independent and precise
distilling lavender and taking lovers,
watering my houseplants on a green morning
unswayed by preconceptions,
impossible to discover.

Consummation

. . . and the lilies of the valley tumble over and over
delicately smothering each the other
and the sunlight penetrates touching them gently
petal teacup edges lit like eyelashes in the water
and i catch them in my hands and love you
slowly penetratingly in silence
wrapping your tender waist around with lilies of the
valley
drifting blowing you in petals
gentle sunlit petals
tumbling over and over
in sweet pure lily
in joy.

Melissa Ruby

From The Chapel

Ironies and Affirmations For the Celebration Of an Ordination Anniversary

David G. Truemper

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."
John *21:15-17*

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So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock.
And when the chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory.
I Peter *5:1-4*

INI

My brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ:

You will not, I trust, have missed the two heavy ironies that weigh upon us this evening. We have gathered around the gospel said and done to give thanks to God with—and for—our brother and father in the faith, Walter, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of a Dakota summer day when father Erich and others invoked the Holy Spirit and laid hands on a young (and some allege—in fantasy, no doubt—beardless) seminary graduate, and they thereby ordained him to the sacred ministry.

The first irony is that we celebrate the anniversary of an ordination at all. Why, much of the church admits to embarrassment about the very idea of ordination—an embarrassment grounded, no doubt, in deep uncertainty and a kind of ecclesial insecurity. There is uncertainty about the propriety of the church (of all things) acting to ordain its clergy; there is insecurity about whether the church may in fact lay claim to any of the grand models of the community of the faithful in the New Testament. And in much of American Protestantism, with its "me-and-my-God" privatism, there is deep embarrassment that we should even need such creatures as clergy. Irony, indeed, that we care about an ordination anniversary.

The second irony is that we take note of an ordination anniversary in a university community where the ordained one functions as a professor, not as a parish pastor. And that calls to mind for us all the quite unique situation, the anomalous situation, in which we find ourselves. There is a ministry of word and sacrament in this place only by a most curious mixture of handshakes, verbal arrangements, and sheer chutzpah! Fragile, indeed—for something that has to do with the very life of

our university, a university whose existence over these fifty-five years continues thanks to an amazing number of handshakes, verbal arrangements, and sheer chutzpah!

Come to think of it, that's not a bad description (though not exactly traditional) of ordination to the sacred ministry: there is laying on of hands (if not shaking of them); there is the verbal arrangement, the word of a Great Shepherd who is prepared to go to great lengths to have his people cared for, the word of God (upon invocation of the Holy Spirit) on the lips of God's servant saying, "I ordain and consecrate you a minister of the church of Jesus Christ"; and all of this is accompanied by the incredible chutzpah of the community in presuming to front for God, to suppose that when it acts, God acts in and through that action, too. That is not just chutzpah; that is blasphemy—unless, of course, the promises we trust are indeed trustworthy.

Anyway, why bother with ordinations? Why bother with ministers, priests, pastors, or whatever else we choose to call them? What do we need them for? If we take our confessional writings seriously, then the response is a ready one: What we need, what we absolutely and utterly need, is the gospel said and done in our midst. What we so utterly need is that our lives thereby get a grounding outside of ourselves. What we so absolutely need is a rescue from the endless treadmill of what Ernest Becker calls our "causa sui project"—that vain attempt to make of ourselves our own creator and sustainer. Now, because we are in utter need of the gospel about Jesus crucified and risen, the Lord who authorizes the preaching of forgiveness in his name, and who bids us break bread and raise a toast together for his remembrance, supplies his church with people to embody that gospeling. Because we utterly need the gospel, we have embodied in our midst the saying and doing of the one thing needful. If there is not gospel, there is no church. That is why the function and structure of gospeling (as Eric Gritsch calls the ministry), the power/authority to say and do what is absolutely necessary for the church's life, is there at all.

So why ordain? Why not? It structures and embodies the function of gospeling.

A second question is, why remember ordinations in an academic community? Why should a church body recognize Walter's work here (and that of another dozen or two of us) to be the same as that of a parish parson, or a foreign missionary, or even a synodical executive? That's a hard question, and it is one we mostly try not to face. There are, after all, some skeletons in the ecclesiastical closet! And our synodical ties make it even more difficult, given the massive unclarity about the ministry in our synod.

To be sure, some of us worry about this more than others do. But this much is warranted.

For the ordained person, it locates one's teaching and counseling and studying and administering in a distinctive context, a churchly context. And it places that work into a new frame of reference, that of the church's special time, the eschaton. And that can bring to the faces of all of us a kind of eschatological smile—vis-a-vis the "assured results" of all academic work, and vis-a-vis the pretensions of every good university to have a hold on truth.

For the community, this is a reminder that even our academic work is sacrament (in the way Alexander Schmemann has taught us to use that word) for a larger reality. You see, we need, not just good teachers, good scholars, good administrators, good counselors, good role models; we need all of them in connection with the one thing needful, the one gospel about the crucified and risen Jesus, for whose sake God risks calling us his people, and in whose living and dying that God has gone to such amazing lengths to claim us as his own and to give us a place in his family.

We need learning. But we utterly need the gospel. We need knowledge. But we absolutely need the gospel. We need leadership. But we are in abject need of the gospel. We need administering. But we are in utter need of the gospel.

Any shepherd worth his or her staff would know that. And God does!

All the lessons read tonight are about sheep and shepherds and the good and great shepherd. Yet I want you to know that there is nothing sheepish about our celebration tonight. Nor are there any grounds for any to say, "Baaa, humbug!" For a sermon on the ministry is not about an individual. It is about God's radical, fanatical, prodigal passion to have his sheep tended and fed, to have his people cared for. And it is about the extraordinary lengths to which that great shepherd is prepared to go to get that tending and feeding, that guarding and caring, done.

Why, he comes even this far, for the likes of us, to feed us with that needed gospel that is being said and done in our midst this evening.

So come, now, and be fed!

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Christian Faith and Academic Work

The Place of Theology in an Academic Community

James F. Moore

Once a person is baptized into the community of Christian people, the church, that person is confronted with a problem. What is one's relation to the world? Is one separated from that world? Does one continue to live in that world as one did before becoming a member of the Christian community?

The problem of the relation of Christians to the so-called "secular world" has occupied the attention of Christian thinkers since the beginning of the church. Particularly, however, since the secularizing of social and political institutions in recent centuries, this matter has become one of acute importance for Christians. One of the areas in which this becomes most apparent is the life and work of the university, where Christian scholars confront the question of the relationship between Christian faith and academic work, between faith and the various disciplines of the life of the mind.

One recent Christian thinker who devoted a great deal of his attention to these matters was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian who was executed by the Nazi leaders because of his involvement in a plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler. Particularly in his posthumously-published *Letters and Papers from Prison* Bonhoeffer developed a notion of a "secular Christianity." Whatever else he may have meant by that term (and scholars can debate that question quite vigorously), it surely includes at least this much: Christianity needs to be in touch with the situation of people in the "real world" of politics and social institutions and academic work.

Ironically, however, when American Christians first became aware (in the mid-1950s) of Bonhoeffer's call for a secular Christianity, American churches were caught up in post-war optimism. Churches were expanding and the influence of religion in American society seemed at its height. Talk of secular Christianity seemed out of place in that setting. Yet, those days of the "baptism boom" became the cradle for a growing secularity among Americans marked by a thorough-going satisfaction with life. In the post-war exuberance even the church supported this celebration.

A Challenge to Cultural Modernity?

Since then, satisfaction with life "as it is" has grown even though the pressures of living often make us despair of the future. In the setting of contemporary secularity, Christianity in America is shrinking. The church no longer enjoys a powerful place in American society, and Christians are no longer so anxious to use Christian belief and religious practice to give credence to their growing satisfaction with life. Christianity is now faced with a dilemma. Can we, as Bonhoeffer suggests, become secular Christians fully supporting a humanity come of age? Can we be satisfied that Christianity must, likewise, be secular, fully involved with this world? Or must we throw up a challenge to cultural modernity? Is Christianity doomed to be in conflict with the secular interests of our society? Is the church inevitably in conflict with the growing capabilities of human beings, with a society that rushes to form new values, with a science that consistently discovers new areas of mastery over what previously have been the"mysteries of life"?

All of these questions are especially troublesome to the church on the university campus. In a university world dominated by the drive to know, the church is viewed by some as a haven and by others as an archaic remnant from a religious past. Neither camp is willing to view the theologian (or even the religious person) as a partner in the endeavor of learning. Few see any reason why religion has any direct relation to the activities of the scientist, the accountant, or the civil engineer. The church, even if it sits in the center of the campus, is really on the periphery of academic work. Like it or not, there is a wide gulf on the campus between the secular life of students, faculty, and staff and the sphere that

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might be relegated to religion. The only way that religion seems able to break away from the periphery is through an open critique of the secular world, such as recently illustrated by the creationist versus evolutionist controversy in California. Such controversies, however, seem to create an even wider gulf between religious concerns and the secular world of learning. There seems to be little hope that the church can enter into the life of the university through such a procedure.

Yet, even though these controversies are often raised in the spirit of passion or even open anger, the apparent conflicts between scientists or other intellectuals and Christian believers do become opportunities for examining these questions and eventually determining a proper place for religious concerns in the academic life. Issues such as those that surround the Christian belief in creation, miracles, the incarnation of God in Christ, and the resurrection can become, for us, a means to determine what Christians might say in their encounter with our secular world. Perhaps we can discover, in our search, the possibilities of a truly secular Christianity as Bonhoeffer describes our present Christian life.

The charge that usually inflames the debates concerning evolution seems to be completely diffused when I walk into my father's planetarium and let him show me the wonder of the heavens. The respect for nature displayed there seems to reach far beyond the feelings ordinarily held by others. Yet, the scientist is often portrayed as an atheist. The worry among many Christians is not only that the scientist challenges the authority of Christian scripture in favor of the truths of human reason and sense experience but that, more centrally, the scientist crowds God out of the world. Even if the scientist does not explicitly say so, many Christian people are worried that science implicitly denies the existence of God.

Science Assumes a World of Order

This argument, however, misrepresents the nature of science. Science, by its own precepts, limits itself to describing the structure and processes of the natural world (and by extension, the universe). Thus, science cannot produce but can only presume the ordered universe necessary to construct theories and discover laws. Even the heralded transformation of science by Einstein and Heisenberg fails to dislodge the basic axiom of an ordered universe. Far from denying a place for God, scientists work with a world-view that in fact leaves open the possibility of a God who is the source of order.

Even the controversial claims of Darwin's theory of evolution, as with any scientific theory, depend upon some pattern, some order. In fact, the view of God consistent with this view of the universe may well be close to the view of God commonly held by most people. Further, despite the mechanical way that science must view events, the scientist, perhaps more than most people, is inclined to approach nature and even the human being with a high degree of esteem. There seems to be little to gain and much to lose by setting up the battle lines over the alleged atheism of science. At least with the esteem granted by scientists to nature and human life, there are grounds for mutual affirmation.

A central notion in the creation stories of Genesis is the ongoing theme of God's evaluation of nature. The God portrayed in the first chapters of Genesis is not merely a God who gives order but also the God who values the creation, who calls all things good. The harmony of the original creation is disturbed only by the free choice of human beings to turn from the guiding hand of the creator God. In this portrayal we have a model of the key issue confronting the relationship between religion and science in a university setting: God is the source of value in the creation stories, and human freedom, though possessing great potential for good, is the source of sin.

Given the freedom to pursue with curiosity the desire to know all things, science has no resource for evaluation of its findings other than the principles of logic and the pursuit of the truth. Yet who would deny, especially in our present world situation, the need for some evaluation of the propriety of certain scientific pursuits? The scientist, the doctor, or the politician must look for help in deciding on the future use of technological developments. The need for evaluative criteria makes it clear that scientific truth does not necessarily produce truth for living. Some examples will illustrate the point. The matter of abortion is not merely a technological concern; even with the most liberal of views, the final decision to abort must be reckoned as a personal and moral decision. Genetic research may well produce techniques for altering the nature of the fetus, but the ultimate decision to use such techniques is not a merely technological matter. Similarly, nuclear energy is potentially a most productive source of power; yet the decisions involving the development and proliferation of nuclear power plants can no longer be viewed as simply dependent upon the technological capabilities of our scientific community.

The future of the world and the quality of the environment depend upon finding resources to make judgments, moral judgments. This need is especially pronounced in the academic community where not only learning takes place but research continues. In this context, the theologian seems especially equipped with the tools to construct an inclusive viewpoint. Theologians, to be sure, are not academic watchdogs, but they can represent a prophetic voice in a society that begs for bases upon which confident decisions can be made. In this way, religious belief can work hand in hand with science, law, business, medicine, and engineering. Alongside scientific theory it can proclaim the theme of God's valuation and evaluation of human activity.

The topic of "miracles" is another area where faith

and scientific thought have conflicted. Much of the difficulty depends on what is meant by the word "miracle." The Broadway play, "Fiddler on the Roof," includes a song "Miracle of Miracles" sung by a young couple who believe that their marriage had been an impossible hope but finally has become a real possibility. The young tailor exclaims, "It's a miracle." Is this a miracle? Indeed, many believe that a miracle is precisely the kind of an event where something that seems impossible becomes possible. Others would argue with such an explanation, insisting that every event has a rational explanation. At best, they would say, the couple experienced an accidental concurrence of separate forces. There is surely a wide gulf between these two views.

The perceived wide gulf mentioned here is often viewed as one between religion and science. Religion, in such a view, is that viewpoint which expects God to act to save. Science, on the other hand, is that activity which operates within the confines of cause and effect, and of predictable results. Even if both of these views can co-exist (also on a university campus), the end result would be division—divisive attitudes that result in confusion.

Many people, students included, have made their peace with this controversy. They have concluded that religion serves a worthy purpose (such as providing the moral base for life), but their basic view of life is scientific. They come to believe that there is a rational explanation for every event (even if that explanation is not immediately apparent), and that there is an eventual scientific cure for most ills (even if a particular cure is not known). In this view, what appears to be impossible is only temporarily unsolvable.

Of course, such views have limits. A utopian society that brings satisfying life to all may still be in our dreams, but most of us no longer believe with any certainty that science can bring about such a society. We have come to the realization that the ills of our society reach into our personal worlds; our plans and our lives can easily be broken by the accidents of this world. Yet, such misgivings do not disturb our basic acceptance of the premise that science offers the most reasonable and acceptable hope for the future. Within this view, talk of miracles seems out of place and, at best, peripheral to people's lives.

Must Christians, therefore, abandon the notion of the miraculous as outdated and pre-scientific? Not really. Belief in miracles is ultimately founded upon trust in the God who promises salvation. Even if miracles seem far from our attention, the God of Christian tradition is the God who acts in this world with the intention of bringing about the divine will. That is why, even in the middle of a day of classes, the university community will offer prayers calling for God's action in the world and in the lives of individuals.

To be sure, few would deny that religion and science represent two different spheres of thought. The scientist simply cannot operate with a view expectant of miracles. Yet the religious person operates with a view dependent upon such expectation. The point to remember is that science is not religion and religion is not science. Most would grant the validity of the differing viewpoints in line with the distinct purposes of science and religion.

What has been said here concerning the relationship between religion and science could be extended, with appropriate modifications, to the relationship between religion and the humanities, religion and the social sciences, or religion and any other sphere of intellectual investigation. The significant point in each case is to identify what kinds of questions are being asked and to specify what kinds of answers can be provided by different disciplines of inquiry. Religion cannot tell us how the world is put together, but through most of human history most people have looked to religion to help them understand why or to what purpose the world exists in the first place.

That still leaves us with two compelling questions: Is there a place for religious belief on a university campus? Is there room for religious belief in the view of most people in a university community?

Theology's Three Roles on Campus

A response can be given that addresses both of these questions. Fundamentally, religious belief and, thus, theology plays a vital role in the university in three ways: (1) as a resource for a broader world view; (2) as a model for community living; and (3) as a witness to a greater purpose for life. Each of these avenues of influence is closely related to the primary religious trust in the God who acts. We shall now address these concerns, and then can move on to take note of the possible impact of two additional elements of the Christian faith —the incarnation of God in Christ and the resurrection, both of which are closely related to the trust in the God who acts.

A typical dilemma faced by college students is the anxiety produced by having five exams in two days. Of course, such a predicament is an expected part of student life. We might even say that the different classes have the right to demand good, thorough work. However, to paraphrase a popular saying, the classroom is no respecter of persons. People are identified by their ability to perform intellectually (students and faculty alike). Though necessary for the process of learning, such a narrow view of human life plays havoc with the full community life of the university.

Obviously, there are ways to break this pattern. There are releases of pent-up resentment, sometimes in the form of bizarre behavior. Yet, the university must have an internal restraint on the all-consuming demands on the student's energy, apparently even for a single course. Religious belief can represent a broader view and so a

balance or restraint. Christians can speak the sincere message of a God who *is* a respecter of persons. All people in the university need to hear that message. Somehow the drive to produce scholars (no matter how much that remains the ideal and the goal) must be matched with a desire to allow students and faculty to be fully human.

The Cross as the Way of Sacrifice

The means that God chooses for the salvation of the world is, according to Christians, the cross of Jesus of Nazareth. Through this sacrifice Jesus is shown to be the ultimate expression of the love of God. For Christians, that sacrifice represents the source for hope and the foundation for community life. The hope is, precisely, that such a love might take over the world and redeem it. University students know something of sacrifice. The spectacle of rush time for the fraternities and the sororities is one of sacrifice. Nearly all contact with civilization and certainly with classwork is sacrificed for the privilege of joining a small, relatively exclusive group. The reason for this frantic offering of self is obvious to most people on campus. The membership gained from enduring this period of trial represents both the hope for the future of the student at the university and the foundation for community. The hope is that such a struggle will produce a commitment that, in the long run, will take the university years, redeem them, and provide a sense of belonging.

Other than superficially, is there any relationship between these two forms of sacrifice? Part of the problem for religion and for the university community is that there does not seem to be. The rush of freshmen and the results of enduring are quite real to students, while the traditional message of Christianity seems quite remote. Yet, there is hope that the Christian message can carry real promise to the student community; that is, if the church on campus can foster the loving community that is the hope—and gift—of Christians.

This community can come about if Christians play the vital role of modeling such a community. As Martin Luther argued, a Christian is a perfectly free Lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all. To match the prophetic voice of evaluation that comes from the Christian commitment to the God who creates, the Christian brings the equally strong commitment to service built upon faith in the God who acts. In and through such service, the true sacrifice of Jesus the Christ is exemplified and made real. When such a servant lifestyle pervades a community (even a university community) the life in the community becomes bearable, even enjoyable. The fever that pushes students frantically to sacrifice all for fraternity or sorority may well be channelled into productive and supportive mutual care and aid, a solidarity among students instead of an exclusiveness of small groups. All this can be done, not with the spirit of judging the life of the university community or of its social organizations and its groups, but with the spirit of supporting the university community with a model of service. In such a community, in what ways can Christian belief provide that kind of support?

Let us not kid ourselves. Our purpose for being at the university is mostly to prepare ourselves for getting a job. We are not aiming at just any job, mind you, for in most cases we aim at a glamorous, acceptable, secure, high-paying job. Little or nothing of campus life escapes the influence of such a purpose; and, above all, competition (great or small) is built into this purpose. We aim to be the most appreciated, the most ingenious, the most capable student in any particular field. Thus, we select areas of major study that potentially could bring us both of these things—respect on campus and a respectable, successful job.

To many, religion might be important but again peripheral to this purpose. Religion is something quite separated from the main flow of life. The concerns raised by religious groups tickle our fancy and may even confront us head-on at times (e.g., in moments of personal tragedy or in tough decisions such as abortion). Nevertheless, religion is viewed as secondary, certainly having little to do directly with the work we project for ourselves. Most significantly, the training provided at the university seems to be completely separated—in fact and in attitude—from religious concerns.

While Christians might lament the fact that religious belief seems to be secondary to the primary purposes of most students, they should not be so quick to lament this situation. After all, the idea that religion is separate from the secular world is foreign to the Christian tradition. God is not envisioned as a separate force that must come and take over our lives. Rather, the full impact of the Christian belief in the incarnation of Christ is that God has identified with the world of which we are a part. Even more today, the fact that God might be more readily associated with everyday life than with so-called religious concerns compels us to rejoice in the secular rather than to condemn it. We can only hope more that the context of life's concerns—the vocation of the individual—be also the place of relating to the center of life's concerns, God. In fact, the way that most Christians relate to the incarnate God is through the chosen context of vocation and in the advancement of ourselves within that vocation.

Accordingly, the Christian belief in the incarnation is an opportunity to rejoice in who we are and where we are (and even what we can become). The God whom Christians know in Jesus Christ is the God who draws near, the personal God, the God of love and support. The love displayed by the incarnation is an affirmation of our world, our value, our destiny. And the full and ultimate impact of the doctrine of the incarnation is the hope for a world come of age, a world that reaches out

for its full potential as a world made by God and one visited and redeemed, as well.

More than that, the doctrine of the incarnation also claims that God has become a part of this world, in the center of things. God has staked his future upon this world, to be sure; but also the future of this world depends upon the activity of the God who loves, the God who serves. The church, therefore, does not stand as an opponent of the university nor even as its watchdog. Rather, the church is charged with the mission of reminding the world come of age of the true source and foundation of all knowledge and achievement. We should be reminded that the various sciences of human endeavor operate by the good graces of a God who has set order and maintains order—in other words, the God who acts. Above all, we should be aware of the ultimate source of hope for us. Our hope cannot rest in our own potential, which certainly can be used for destruction as well as prosperity. Instead, Christians can found their hope upon a resource that has the potential to bind us all together, the God of love.

Sacred and Secular are Inseparable

In addition, theology operates on a university campus as a serving discipline to the other disciplines. Rather than bemoan the growing interest in professional and technical jobs, theologians are properly concerned about supporting vocational decisions with the assurance that all places of work may equally be opportunities for Christian growth and service. Evidence of such ongoing support of the disciplines of the university can be seen in the course offerings of the university's department of theology, some of which relate explicitly to other disciplines. Thus, an ongoing pattern of theology courses can serve as a moral boost to students throughout the period of job preparation at the university.

The issue that we have been raising throughout this section of the essay is whether there is a God who acts in our secular world. In response, we have suggested that Christianity historically has proclaimed a God who identifies with this world through the incarnation and sacrifice of Jesus the Christ. However, God in Christ not only identifies with the world; according to Christians, the message of the gospel also proclaims that this God acts in the world decisively to save it. Taken seriously, this means that every human activity (going to class, working in the lab, eating at the union, or studying till the late hours) is done in co-ordination with a God who is also busy acting on our behalf. That means that every activity, not just the choice of vocation, can take on a greater purpose. There are no merely mundane acts. There is truly no separation between sacred and secular.

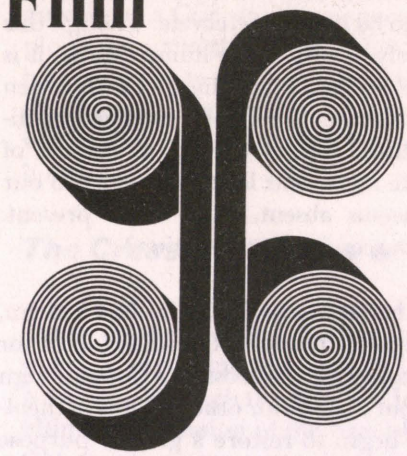
Ironically, since this God is so closely associated with our lives as a whole, God appears to be absent from our lives. There is nothing miraculous, for us, about our everyday existence. And if God is truly absent from our lives, there appears to be little to celebrate. Though this viewpoint is ultimately deadly to the human spirit, it is nevertheless quite common. Even the moments when we are inclined to celebrate are at best momentary diversions—e.g., a Saturday night beer blast. Instead of confidence in life, life represents loneliness even in our celebrations. God seems absent, even when present. What are faith's resources for that situation?

Christian belief is belief in a God who is often hidden, hidden under the sign of the cross. Christians have for centuries looked to celebrate the cross, the ultimate sign of despair for some but of hope for others. Thus, a theology of the cross can begin to restore a greater purpose to life. The God who seems so far away can become alive (this in fact, is the true meaning of the resurrection) for us. The vital trust that there is more potential to life than just what I produce, more than what I am judged for, rests upon the activity of a God who is close, the God who suffers, the God who lives. For along with the confession of a God who is hidden in the cross, Christians have always proclaimed the God who is alive. The resurrection of Jesus Christ remains a sign for Christians that the God who loves is bringing about his purpose in our world and in our lives. For that reason, though the fact of the resurrection remains beyond the scope of purely scientific demonstration, the impact of a theology of resurrection is essential to the life of the university community. In that belief, Christians maintain a focus upon the greater purpose for this world, even our individual lives. The proclamation of that purpose remains the central task of the Christian in the world.

Nevertheless, the Christian is not a Pied Piper who is leading the small band of believers out of this world. In Jesus Christ, God who is raised for us is raised into this world; the God who acts is the God who is bringing about God's kingdom in this world. The Christian follows the serving God into the world in order both to proclaim the world's greater purpose and to point the way to the fulfillment of that purpose. Part of that greater purpose is, most certainly, living out the full meaning of love as exemplified in Jesus Christ.

Ultimately, the task of theology, and of Christian believers, in the university is to proclaim, clarify, and exemplify the greater purpose given to life by the God who acts. In this way, theology is more than a serving discipline. Theology is that vital central discipline for life that constantly challenges us to give meaning and purpose to all actions, all vocations, all relationships. Theologians are properly challenged to be relevant to the variety of disciplines in the university. At the same time, theology challenges all of us to be relevant; it challenges the disciplines of the university to be responsible and responsive, and it offers the Christian resources to make the university experience life-enhancing.

Film



Military Movies and The Contradictions of American Culture

Richard Maxwell

The crazed war veteran has transcended his ideological origins and become a film staple.

Making a military movie these days isn't easy. Viewers want to believe the old clichés but they know too much. The result is an emphasis on camp or nostalgic revivals: the fighter-pilot scenes of *Star Wars,* Lee Marvin's tough-sergeant act in *The Big Red One,* service-comedy hijinks in *Private Benjamin.* Just this summer we had *Stripes,* a lighter-than-air farce starring Bill Murray as a slob who becomes a national hero. It is the way he becomes a hero that tells all. When his soldier buddies blunder into some Iron Curtain country, Private Murray and a few pals use a top-secret army van to rescue them. Instead of annihilating inner-city rioters, as it was designed to do, the van is used on commies. American technology not only works, it saves *hostages.* Each and every one of the soldiers gets out alive and becomes a media hero.

This nonsense is predictable. Real-life wars are depressing. The blood tends to be one's own or one's friends'. Just a year or two ago Jimmy Carter talked as though all the male high-school graduates in America were destined to parachute into Afghanistan—or was it Iran? Reagan talks an even better battle. It may not happen but then again it may. In the meantime we can sit tight and watch Bill Murray or Goldie Hawn undergo basic training.

So much for the predictable part. Now to a weird and slightly peripheral development, quite outside the trend I've described and a good deal more involving. Outcast war veterans had never been exactly prominent in American film—unless they came from the Confederacy, like John Wayne in *The Searchers* or Rod Steiger in *Run of the Arrow* (both 1956). By the late Seventies this situation had changed. Our friend the crazed Vietnam war veteran became an accepted icon of history's ravages. He was first beloved of anti-Vietnam audiences, who could envision him as either the agent of American imperialism or its helpless victim. He could also be used to inflame right-wing sympathies: an exhilarating little film called *Rolling Thunder* had him enlisting a few old war buddies to wipe out the hippies and dopers who had massacred his family. With his all-American but unbalanced face, Bruce Dern made a specialty of the role; William Devane got off one or two good performances in the same vein, as did other young actors.

Somehow or other—and here is the odd part—this figure has survived its occasion. Crazed veterans had quite a respectable presence the last year or so, having appeared in *Escape from New York, Breaker Morant,* and *Cutter's Way,* to name three films I will touch on. To see these movies along with *Stripes,* which has no memory of Vietnam, can be an unsettling experience. They seem to have entered 1980 through a time warp. At a moment when our culture is, if anything, gearing up for war, they recall a military venture that was by everyone's standards disastrous and shoddy. I don't want to explain this persistence so much as contemplate it: it offers a beautiful study in the present contradictions of American popular culture.

John Carpenter's *Escape from New York* proposes that sometime in the indefinite future New York City has become a high-security federal prison, where particularly bad people are permanently incarcerated. You may find this idea funny or you may think it a nasty racist attack on America's crumbling cities. Either way your attention will be directed to the sinister figure of Kurt Russell, previously familiar as a Walt Disney star (*Superdad, The Horse in the Grey Flannel Suit*). In *Escape* Russell plays Snake Pliskin, a notorious veteran of World War III (yes, III) who talks just like Clint Eastwood and is thus chosen for a special mission. After a plane crash, the President (Donald Pleasance) is taken prisoner by the Duke of New York (bad Isaac Hayes), who holds him as a bargaining counter. Russell has to get the President out. His adventures are presented with scattered effectiveness: there is a pointed descent-into-hell feeling about the best parts of the film. Out of these scenes emerges Pliskin's character—Clint Eastwood all right, but with a twist that must be Carpenter's or Russell's.

Current military films feature veterans who don't trust government or much of anything else.

World War III aside, Pliskin is that same old embittered Vietnam veteran, the man who once believed in the government but now thinks everything is a lie. He goes into New York as part of a deal—certainly not for patriotic reasons. Russell's personal life is relevant here. He says in a recent interview, "My generation couldn't stand me and I

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Contemporary military movies are often ambiguous in their political leanings, but they are clear in assuming that all establishments are hopelessly corrupt.

couldn't stand them. I believed in the work ethic, making money, and they all had this beef with the nation. Vietnam disappointed *me* because we didn't win." Russell implies that he still thinks this way, but at the same time he finds Snake "a very appealing character . . . when he walks down the street, he's in *control*, an island, totally alone. I like that."[1] All-American boy turns punk—or is it the other way around? The interesting thing about Snake Pliskin or Kurt Russell is that you cannot tell. Two contradictory figures are smashed together into one character, which is Russell's and Pliskin's alike. *Escape* ends by implying that Pliskin really does care about honor and freedom, although no one else in the world does. Institutions are rotten by definition. It would seem that the film can afford its exaltation of military heroism—however alienated—only by asserting that every other alternative is corrupt.

It is embarrassing to be caught discussing the meaning of *Escape from New York*. The film's murky politics hides behind the Pliskin character: it is embodied in a big scary guy who represents only himself. *Breaker Morant* offers no such disruptions. Here if anywhere is a movie meant to be discussed, a movie so eminently discussable that it seems to have been made for the classroom. This Australian film of a few years ago garnered awards in its native country and no doubt deserved them. It is earnest and beautiful—also a trifle hollow. It concerns the Boer War, sometimes called the first guerilla war. Making much of an implied comparison with Vietnam, *Breaker Morant* focusses on the court-martial of three British officers accused of killing prisoners—something the other side had been doing all along. Under pressure from the British government, the court convicted the officers, sentencing two of them to death.

This film's general sympathies are unmistakable. The politicians who run the war and make the peace are slimy, cowardly villains who sacrifice good soldiers for the sake of diplomatic compromise. On the other hand, the prosecuted officers are brave men who did what they had to under desperate circumstances. Anyone who got a chance to see *Breaker Morant* should turn to an essay by Richard Grenier in the May *Commentary* where this perspective is analyzed at length. After quoting an interview with director Bruce Beresford, Grenier concludes that *Breaker Morant* is a film made "in conscious defense of William Calley." That such a movie should have "received ovations" is an "historic event," he notes. On these terms an event like My Lai is an acceptable, indeed necessary consequence of a war where soldiers are disguised as civilians. Calley is the rightful hero of Vietnam just as Breaker Morant and his fellow officers were the heroes of the Boer War. These men, and others like them, do the work on which our civilization is based.[2]

We have an extraordinary new war movie hero: the all-American boy as pathological punk.

Grenier's flawed but interesting essay digs a pit for itself by being more articulate than *Breaker Morant*. Slimy politicos and brave officers, yes—but *Breaker Morant* is not an issue of *Commentary*. It is more like *Reader's Digest*, vaguely conservative but with a little something for almost everybody. The film has a slightly liberal hero, the defense attorney played by Jack Thompson, whose stirring concluding speech is made in ignorance of his clients' real deeds. It also has a conservative hero (I guess), the officer Handcock who secretly picks off a minister he suspects of being a Boer spy. This action becomes the key issue in the trial. The film has, finally, a hero for nihilists—Breaker Morant himself. Morant, the senior officer under prosecution, is a loyal and intelligent soldier who can tame horses, quote Byron, and fight.[3] By the end of the film he is so completely disillusioned that he even refuses a chance to escape his execution. He is a death-obsessed man whose sensibility infuses the lyrical execution scene at the end of the movie. Snake Pliskin, move over.

Between *Breaker Morant* and *Escape from New York*, viewers may get enough of embittered lethal soldiers. The best, however, is to come. In August, *Cutter's Way* opened at the *Biograph* in Chicago; like *The Stunt Man* last year the film has become a *cause celèbre* by garnering good reviews and just barely getting released. Directed by Ivan Passer, it is adapted from a fine 1977 novel by Newton Thornburg titled *Cutter and Bone*. For most of its length the movie faithfully follows its source. Alex Cutter (played brilliantly by John Heard) is a one-legged half-blind Vietnam veteran living in

[1] *Village Voice*, July 8-14, 1981.

[2] See esp. p. 76 of Grenier's review. Grenier is not quite straight with his reader. He (plausibly) condemns liberals for abusing Vietnam soldiers as baby-killers, then argues that baby-killing is what modern wars are necessarily all about. This is one of those cases where journalism is more bloodthirsty than soldiering. Grenier, by the way, wants to link his attitude with Rudyard Kipling's, but strangely fails to cite "A Sahib's War," the Kipling story that best substantiates his point.

[3] Morant's Byron quote is the little poem titled "Stanzas," beginning: "When a man hath no freedom to fight for at home,/Let him combat for that of his neighbours;/Let him think of the glories of Greece and of Rome,/And get knock'd on the head for his labours." The poem was written in Italy, at a time when Byron was under danger of arrest for his contacts with nationalistic revolutionaries. Morant, on the other hand, was fighting as a representative of British empire. A confusing juxtaposition.

The new war movies in their ironies and hedgings-about may signal an ideology about to collapse.

Santa Barbara, California. When his friend Richard Bone (Jeff Bridges, well cast) recognizes a powerful tycoon as a murderer, Cutter encourages Bone to press the matter, to expose the man or maybe blackmail him. From this point on, Cutter and Bone get into a lot of trouble. Cutter is at war with society. He uses the reluctant but amiable Bone—full-time hedonist, part-time gigolo—to prosecute the war. The best scenes in both book and movie show these friends struggling with one another: wild, satiric paranoia against spineless calculation. A perfect match, it turns out: Bone always gets Cutter out of trouble by reminding people that his friend is a psychotic who was ruined by Vietnam. Cutter depends on Bone doing this and then mocks him for it.

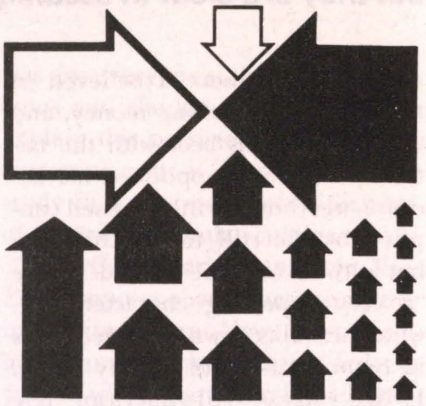
***Cutter and Bone* ends with an individualized version of the charge of the light brigade.**

As long as the film's script sticks closely to this relationship, *Cutter's Way* works. It evokes a time, a place, and a mood; it tells a story elliptically but effectively. So much the worse, then, that Passer throws out the last two hundred pages of *Cutter and Bone,* trying instead for his own symbolical slam-bang ending. The turning-point in the novel comes when Cutter's wife Mo perishes under mysterious circumstances—by suicide, accident, or just possibly as a threat from the blackmailed tycoon. Mo dies soon after making love to Bone. Her death will change everything between Bone and Cutter, indirectly destroying them both. Passer, alas, gives us no time to take in this transformation. Where Thornburg's novel manages a series of frightening, revelatory turns Passer bets everything on one grandiose gesture.

Cutter and Bone crash a party at the tycoon's estate. When they are chased by security men, Cutter rides a white horse, no less, through the wall-sized window of his enemy's study. The charge kills him, leaving Bone to shoot the tycoon's brains out in the last frame of the film. Bone is finally forced to do Cutter's work for him. Unfortunately Passer never allows any hint of whether the tycoon is guilty. Thornburg's novel narrates a quest for vengeance that has a wavering, and thus tantalizing, basis in reality. Passer's film is finally about baseless, suicidal paranoia, seen as the only heroism possible to these protagonists in this time: a charge of the light brigade, Southern-California style.

Passer comes from Czechoslovakia: are we getting here an Eastern European view of the American scene? We might suspect so, except that the American Carpenter and the Australian Beresford try for much the same combination, black despair and finely-wrought nostalgia, Alex Cutter on a white horse. It would seem that the figure of the Vietnam veteran cannot easily be divested of meaning (as *Stripes, Star Wars,* etc., trivialize their military images). Instead directors end up struggling with it. Typically, in 1980, symbolic characters like Cutter, Morant, and Pliskin are so overloaded with ironies and hedgings-about that we seem to witness a whole ideology right at the moment of collapse. A 1960s dilemma is viewed from competing perspectives, as though these films had stumbled upon a sort of unintentional cubism. None of them, not even *Cutter's Way,* comes off as a left-wing venture but then none allows a conservative statement, Reagan-style, to dominate. History is revealed, is evaluated, by the imagined anger of its survivors. This curious affair makes me wonder what's next for military movies—of which we will, I suppose, see a good many more in the near future.

The Nation



Solidarity For Never

The Weakness Of Fraternity Among American Trade Unions

Albert R. Trost

Until the Polish workers' movement of the last eighteen months began to identify itself by the word, solidarity had pretty much disappeared from American political rhetoric and discourse. Before the Poles gave the symbol a new respectability, Americans associated the idea with trade union militancy, left-wing politics, or the class politics of Europe. These are all contexts foreign to the contemporary American, so appeals for solidarity are rarely heard in America today, even in labor circles. Things were not always as they are now: solidarity was a common symbol in the formative days of the unions in the United States.

How alien the concept of solidarity is to current American political rhetoric, especially in our labor unions, was brought home to me on a recent trip to Europe which had just commenced when the American air traffic controllers left their jobs. After a few more days, the Amer-

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In most of Europe, the dismissal and jailings of the air controllers would have brought a more broad-ranging and unified response by labor than it did in America.

ican government dismissed the air traffic controllers and sent several of them to jail. Dependent on air transportation back to the United States and facing the start of a new school term in only two weeks, I found myself following events with more than casual interest. I became an avid reader of stories and editorials on the dispute in Irish and British newspapers, and I watched as many television news reports as possible.

Over ten days, the whole picture became very disturbing. All the European news reports seemed to indicate that a major and ominous confrontation was building between workers and the American government. World air traffic would come to a standstill. In the United States, labor unions would unite to counteract the "union-busting" tactics of the government, and President Reagan would suffer a setback in the confidence of the American public. The cataclysmic forecasts began to sound unreal, and at that point it became apparent to me that the Europeans, quite naturally, were using their own experiences with labor disputes to understand ours. The two political contexts, however, are very different.

In general terms, the Europeans saw the events, especially the "sacking" of the air controllers, as far more provocative and ominous than they appeared in the United States. In most of the European nations the dismissal and jailing of the air controllers would have brought a more broad-ranging and unified response by labor. Because labor is more significant politically, a major confrontation between the government and labor could have been expected. To put it another way, the feelings of solidarity in the trade union movement in Europe and the perception of class interests would have guaranteed a larger scale of conflict.

To take the United Kingdom as an example, it would be reasonable in such a situation to expect other unions to strike or take action in sympathy with the air controllers. There might even be cross-national industrial action. There would certainly be dramatic high-level meetings and confrontations between the government and the trade unions, especially with the present Conservative government. The Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Transport would be negotiating for the government side. In addition to officials of the air controllers' union, other major national labor figures would be involved, including the General Secretary of Trades Union Congress (somewhat like the AFL-CIO). This scenario has the bite of reality about it since it has actually taken place in Britain several times in the last ten years. The most notable instance was the strike by coal miners seven years ago, which ended up bringing down the Conservative government of Edward Heath.

The most obvious and immediate reason for different labor responses in Europe and the United States is that a significantly lower percentage of workers in the United States belongs to trade unions.

In the case of the American air controllers, we have already seen gestures of solidarity from some European and South Pacific air controllers. Perhaps a better example of solidarity in the United Kingdom was the threat by the journalists' union to take action against *The Times* of London for printing an editorial that commended President Reagan for his decisive action against the air controllers. The dispute with *The Times* was settled when the newspaper provided space for the union position to be articulated as well. Ironically, the British media had been emphasizing the point that Reagan's firing of the American controllers and his refusal to recognize the strike was a denial of the free speech of the air controllers. The journalists' union must have felt that solidarity was a more important value than an independent press. With all the talk of acts of solidarity with the American strikers in the United Kingdom, one wonders if the American air controllers would have felt solidarity with their British colleagues if the strike had started on the other side of the Atlantic.

The most obvious and immediate reason for different labor responses in Europe and the United States is that a significantly lower percentage of the working force in the United States belongs to trade unions. In the mid-1970s, 22% of the American work force belonged to unions, compared to 41% in Germany, 43% in the United Kingdom, and 70% in Sweden. It is of direct significance to the air controllers' dispute that even a lower percentage of public employees are organized in unions in the United States, about 20%. The proportion is very much larger in European countries.

Another major difference between European and American unions is the much closer connection between unions and the government in Europe. In the United Kingdom, the Trades Union Congress is tied formally to the Labor party. When the Labor party is in power, as it was from 1964 to 1970 and from 1974 to 1980, the unions have direct access to the top decision-makers. There is also a very close connection, though a less formal one, between the trade unions in the Federal Republic of Germany and the governing Social Democratic party. Scandinavia also follows this pattern. In France, Italy, and Spain the unions are more divided politically

In all the European political systems there is a much stronger and more constant political role for the trade unions than is the case here in the United States.

and more identified with the opposition than with the government. However, in all the European political systems there is a much stronger and more constant political role for the unions than is the case in the United States. In the European nations there are formal legal and constitutional requirements that unions be consulted on economic and social policies. Trade unions there see themselves as responsible for confronting the government as vigorously as they confront employers.

In contrast, in the United States unions are not as closely tied to government and do not have the influence on public policy that they have elsewhere. Unions here have been losing members as the service sector has increased and the manufacturing sector of the economy has declined. Also, unions in the United States are fragmented geographically and economically. Our federal system has been partly responsible for that fragmentation. All of this, coupled with political disunity among the unions, results in less political influence for American unions than is the case with their European counterparts.

The real explanation for the influence and the solidarity of European unions in comparison to those in America lies in the differing political cultures of the United States and the European nations.

This is most evident in the weakening of the relationship between trade unions and the Democratic party, a trend very evident in the 1970s. Some unions like the Teamsters (and the air controllers) have supported national Republican candidates. But unions have traditionally supported the Democrats, and it is within the Democratic party that union influence has most visibly suffered. Labor has lost the virtual veto power over Democratic party positions in party platforms and in Congress that it had in the days of the New Deal and the Great Society. In the last two years the unions have found the party reluctant to adopt labor's stands on full employment, progressive taxes, universal health insurance, and most significantly, laws facilitating union organization.

It is ironic that it is in the United States, with its reputation for pluralism and decentralization of governmental authority, that unions are weaker *vis-a-vis* government than in almost any other industrialized state. Countries with a much more developed tradition of centralized authority have trade unions that are much more politically effective and can serve more as a countervailing force to the government.

The real explanation for the influence and the solidarity of European trade unions in comparison to those in America does not lie in figures which show the percentage of the work force which is unionized or in organizational linkages between unions and other political institutions. The explanation lies deeper in the respective political cultures of the United States and the European nations. Specifically, two elements seem particularly important. The first is the lower relevance of working class identification in the United States. The other is the great strength of the liberal (individualist) tradition in our country.

In listening to interviews with the American air controllers, it becomes clear that they do not see themselves as working class. They view themselves as middle-class professionals entitled to the $30,000 to $40,000 that they earn. This situation holds not only for the air controllers. Most American trade union members, even though they earn much less than the controllers, ignore class references. A proletarian or working-class label is not a mark of distinction or pride. It cannot serve as a basis for solidarity as it does in the more stratified and class-conscious societies of Europe.

Even more significant as an impediment to the re-entry of solidarity into the ranks of labor as a symbol or an operating principle is the liberal tradition. This tradition, which places the highest value on the freedom of the individual, sees little of positive value in the claims for loyalty which a group or a class might make. Local trade unions around the country attempt to maximize material benefits for their members. Except for a few cases of industry-wide bargaining, this pursuit of benefits and happiness goes on without reference to a larger community of workers. Local conditions and individual security and happiness are the relevant concerns. Concepts of solidarity, community, or fraternity are rarely invoked. From the standpoint of American labor and the liberal tradition, the air traffic controllers are alone and "free" to solve their problem.

The plight of the air traffic controllers is hardly the best one to use to make a case for solidarity. Even Europeans have a difficult time understanding the high salaries and the right of retirement after twenty years. But it is unfortunate that the term is out of general currency in the United States. Stronger unions would serve as a potential check on some kinds of abusive governmental and corporate power. Americans especially have a need to see their fate tied to others, to see connections and commonalities with people of other conditions and other nationalities. Perhaps the Poles who have found solidarity in their opposition to a repressive regime will do more for the concept than has the plight of the air traffic controllers.

Theatre

The play offers a modern *Beggar's Opera* minus much of the original's light-hearted cynicism.

The Least of These

Lanford Wilson's *Balm In Gilead* Offers a Raw Slice of Pure Naturalism

John Steven Paul

I

(*Note: The Steppenwolf Theatre of Chicago recently revived its production of* Balm in Gilead, *a play written by Lanford Wilson in 1964.*)

The Apollo Theatre on Lincoln Avenue in Chicago is a special place. Neither decayed baroque palace nor storefront makeshift, the Apollo has an excellent staging space, good sight-lines, and commodious, hospitable public areas. Thoroughly functional, inviting, and clean. Thus the cigarette butts littering the vomitoria between lobby and seating were a startling sight. For the moment one thought they were carelessly left behind by the 7:00 audience now just out of the auditorium minutes before the 9:30 show. But there were too many to be litter. No, these were props: a thousand cigarette butts for a play about street life in New York City. And it's true, of course, that if you walk with your head down in New York, your view is cluttered with cigarette butts.

The cigarette butts were just one element in John Malkovich's production of Lanford Wilson's play. A "milieu" play, it might be called; playwright and director strive to recreate the features and feelings of a specific environment, in this case an all-night cafe in the sleaziest section of Manhattan. Generally one thinks of an environment in physical terms. Here, a horseshoe-shaped lunch counter, there, a row of booths. In the back grimy walls, greasy cooking gear, a pay phone attached to a wall full of numbers, a filthy toilet room opened occasionally to the audience's full view. The intimacy of the theatre, the close proximity of the audience to the stage, intensified the physical meanness of the place.

The essence of this environment is not in its physical material, but in its human material. The play's many characters are themselves threads in the environmental tapestry. The characters tend to fall into categories. There are hoods, hustlers, prostitutes (straight), prostitutes (transvestite), and prostitutes (Lesbian). There are addicts, pushers, pimps, and dealers. There is the cafe staff. The actors in these roles have lines to say and cues to follow, but their contributions to the production are more scenic than histrionic. That is, their two-hour long collective conversation, made up of arguments, assignations, drug deals, coffee orders, and consolation, forms the scenic context in which the dramatic action takes place. In the Steppenwolf production this human environment was set in motion by the grinding rhythms of Tom Waits' desperate brand of rock music—a contemporary American *Beggar's Opera* minus much of the eighteenth century light-hearted cynicism.

To this environment comes Darlene, a girl escaping an empty life and a ruined love affair back home in Chicago. Her story forms the plot of the play: a simple, predictable plot. Frightened and repelled by the people who confront her in the cafe, Darlene retreats to a booth and the company of a boy who looks strong, poised, and "normal." This is Joe, a middle-class New Yorker on the scene for who-knows-what. Their initial casual contact leads to a scene of sexual relations in Darlene's hotel room which seems positively pure and innocent compared to the action going down around them. Their relationship is ill-fated, however. Joe has contracted to push drugs for a major dealer and has accepted his first shipment. He's overdue on his first payment and it is clear that his tardiness will cost him his life. Before the play ends, Joe is murdered and Darlene is again bereft.

Why produce a play whose plot is so simple and predictable, whose characters are weak and in most cases revolting, whose setting is unsettling and oppressive? More to the point, what is the appeal of this production that audiences called for its revival within a year of its debut?

II

Balm in Gilead is a descendant of dramatic and theatrical Naturalism, a movement born in Europe in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The story of Naturalism on stage actually begins about 1850 with the broader Realist reaction to the romanticism of Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas, *pere*, and Alfred Musset among others. The Realists sought to look at the entire range of civilization's problems soberly, rationally, critically, in short, free of the filters of idealism and sentimentality. Realism encompassed many thematic and formal variations, perhaps the most famous being Henrik Ibsen's middle-class problem plays including *An Enemy of the People, Ghosts,* and *A Doll's*

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At the end, Jeremiah's ancient cry echoed up from the Old Testament, through the several voices and figures huddled in that mean cafe, and into our own throats.

House.

A child of Realism, Naturalism inherited the earlier movement's critical perspective but departed from its typically middle-class themes and characters. Dramatists such as Emile Zola (the movement's theorist and publicist), Gerhardt Hauptmann, and Maxim Gorki focused their dramatic vision on the underside of life: the problems of the unfortunates, the poor, the desperate, those forced into panhandling, pandering, and prostitution in order to survive. Naturalist characters appeared to be totally at the mercy of their environment, unable to exercise their free will effectively. The benchmark of European Naturalism was the Russian Gorki's *The Lower Depths* (1902), a drama of several human wrecks, living in conditions generative of all kinds of social evil.

On stage, Naturalist *regisseurs* were fanatical in their attempts to recreate the circumstances of actual life. Technicians equipped settings with functioning plumbing and cooking apparatus. Functional properties and set pieces became the rule. (For a play called *The Butchers*, actual sides of beef, dripping blood, were placed on the stage.) The presentation of a *tranche de vie* became the staging ideal: life unadorned, unarranged, and the spectators' view of it unfocused and unfiltered. In Moscow, Constantin Stanislavski developed an integrated acting system based on the concept of psychological naturalism; that is, a method for producing psychologically-motivated rather than pretended action on stage. For his production of *The Lower Depths*, Stanislavski and his actors spent hours in a Moscow slum observing its denizens. Their resulting production seemed so authentic to the audience that it feared infestation by vermin.

Naturalist drama did not fare well in America, at least not in the early years of the century. While democratic theatre audiences cheered the recognizable scenes and minutiae common to everyday life, their puritanical aversion to frankness (especially sexual) and their desire for sentimental characters and happy endings doomed the new European drama to damnation from the critics and indifference from the public. When the great American producer David Belasco married naturalistic production style to thematic sentimentality and optimism, theatre audiences lionized him. But Belasco's career faded as the movies began to out-Belasco him. Today the cinema and television continue to employ primarily naturalistic production styles. As for the American theatre, Ibsen and the Realists did have significant impact on dramatists in the thirties and after (e.g., Odets, Hellman, Inge, and Miller), but examples of pure Naturalism in the style of Hauptmann and Gorki have been rare.

III

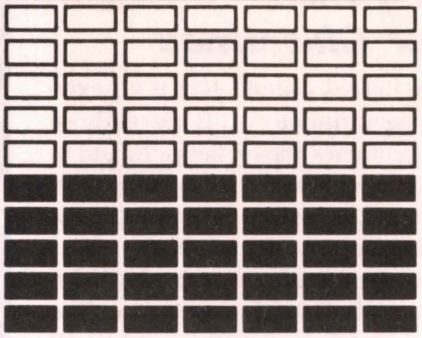
If *Balm in Gilead* is a rare example of European-style Naturalism, the question of the production's value remains. From one point of view, of course, any play that has made such a commercial success is valuable. Yet why is a play about junkies and prostitutes so well received? The appeal of the Steppenwolf production is multi-leveled. On the lowest level, the production appeals to the voyeuristic impulse in those of us sheltered in small college towns, shuttered from the slice of life Lanford Wilson has chosen to dramatize. These are people and activities with which we ordinarily permit ourselves no commerce.

A production of the quality of *Balm in Gilead* is also appealing in its display of mimetic proficiency by its young actors. That these thirty young people (one, Kim Nardelli, a graduate of our own program at Valparaiso University) were able to give such thoroughly convincing and consistent performances as representatives of humanity's dregs was both thrilling and agonizing to watch. That their performance as an ensemble was more than the sum of their individual performances is a tribute to the Steppenwolf Theatre Acting Ensemble and director John Malkovich.

It should be said that neither Malkovich nor Lanford Wilson slavishly towed the line of Naturalist theatrical technique. There was here no attempt to try to fool the audience into believing that it had made a wrong turn on Lake Shore Drive and ended up in Times Square. Rather, the director, following the playwright's instructions, made a baldly and blatantly theatrical statement. He directed the audience's thoughts and awareness to the precise portion of the cafe where a particularly meaningful line was being said or action being played. The use of focus spotlighting, stop-action, and repeated sequences allowed the audience to peer inside the boundaries of a sub-culture that many of us might have otherwise hurried by on the other side of the street, kicking cigarette butts into the gutter.

Once inside the cafe, we made once again the startling discovery of the universal patterns of human existence which have long been the subject of the drama. This is the third level on which *Balm in Gilead* appealed. Remarkably, among the least of these our brethren, we found the ancient generic elements of terror and pity with which Sophocles imbued his *Oedipus Tyrannus*. The characters, their collected troubles, joys, relationships, losses, loneliness, hopes, and desolation, became a metaphor for those of our own. And Jeremiah's ancient cry, "Is there no balm in Gilead?" echoed up from the Old Testament, through the several voices and figures huddled in that mean cafe, and into our own throats.

Campus Diary



On a porch in Minnesota, reflections on the meaning and temptations of the American Dream.

The View From The Back Porch

John Strietelmeier

Sitting on the back porch of my brother-in-law's house just outside a small town northwest of Minneapolis, I think I may have found the fulfillment of the American Dream.

Let me say at the outset that, if anyone can deserve a set-up like this, these people do. Whatever they have today they earned by hard, socially-useful work. And it hasn't all been work for themselves. Both have given lavishly of their time to their community and their parish. Chet has served as mayor of the town and president of the Lutheran congregation. Marge has been deeply involved in working with children.

But the pay-off has been good, and they would be the last to deny it. From this back porch the land slopes down through thick woods to the shore of Lake Koronis. Heavy storms and chilly temperatures have kept us off the lake, but we have sat in the beach house looking out over the lake and experiencing the immense calm of this out-of-the-way place. Today, though, the back porch, glassed in and warmed by an electric heater, seems to offer better prospects of comfort to a writer whose sedentary work generates little body heat in this unseasonal chill.

If it is one of the identifying marks of the American Dream that it contains a large element of hope and promise for the future, it is not hard from this back porch to see what form that hope and promise might take: a piece of land, some trees, access to fresh water, clean air, a comfortable house, a friendly dog, a handsome car, good friends, agreeable neighbors, worthwhile work, fellowship in the Body of Christ, a useful role in the community. Sophisticates may dismiss it as too bourgeois for words, but in so doing they would only confirm what I believe to be of the essence of the American Dream, i.e., that it is an idealization and codification of Middle Class values derived ultimately and in large part from the main-line Christian tradition.

I will leave to theologians the troublesome question of the extent to which this tradition itself may be a dilution, if not a denial, of the Christianity of Jesus Christ and His earliest followers. I confess to some difficulty in imagining St. Peter or St. Simon Zelotes or the Sons of Thunder feeling at ease in such a relaxing milieu. On the other hand, I can imagine St. Paul coming back, weary from his travels, to such a place and to the company of his books and parchments. And if I may say so without irreverence, I can imagine an even greater One, notorious in the neighborhood as "a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber," doing fish boils for His friends down by the dock.

If I am right in postulating a relationship of the American Dream to the main-line Christian tradition, it would follow that something like half of the American people may not find it all that attractive. My Jewish friends, living (as I see it) in the twilight of the Faith, and my secular humanist friends, living in the long afterglow of the Faith, would surely challenge my identification of the Dream with any religion and might, in fact, fundamentally redefine the Dream itself. Our definitions of the good life are as varied as our backgrounds. But, in one way or another, our personalized versions of the American Dream contain the two indispensable elements of hope and promise for the future. Without these, the Dream degenerates into the nightmare of mere survival.

Even into this pleasant back porch that nightmare intrudes itself. The newspapers come morning and evening with their daily ration of news and comment about the national defense. My mind, which has always resisted the concept of overkill, completely rejects the figures in which the dimensions of American and Russian overkill are stated. Is it double or triple or fifty-fold or a hundred-fold? I think that I read somewhere once that the Russians have a nuclear bomb for every county in the United States. And we have more than they have. And still the President tells us that we have to increase defense spending by something like fifty billion dollars. What's more, he could very well be right.

Suspended here on this porch between the newspapers with their headlines and the woods with its profound stillness, I am mightily tempted to embrace the heresy of Matthew Arnold: to draw back from the world which is, indeed, a darkling plain where ignorant armies clash by night into a private world where true lovers find fulfillment in each other and can let the rest of the world go by. But tempting though the thought is, a heresy it surely is. Browning spoke more truly and more Christianly when he confessed his "need of a world of men." To that need I shall yield tomorrow when we start for home. But for the rest of today, "'tis good, Lord, to be here."

For Good Reading
In a Glad New Year

In Time— For Christmas

The herald angels' song is an everlasting antiphony . . . It moves down the centuries above, beneath, and in the earth from Christmas to Christmas to Christmas . . . In it alone is hope before death and after death . . . Their song lives to the 2,000th Christmas, to the 3,000th, and at length to the last Christmas the world will see . . . And on that final Christmas, as on the first, the angels will know, as we must know now, that the heart which began to beat in Bethlehem still beats in the world and for the world . . . And for us . . .

O. P. Kretzmann
The Pilgrim

Many years will pass before you understand Christmas . . . In fact, you will never understand it completely . . . But you can always believe in it, always . . . The Child has come to keep us company . . . To tell us that heaven is nearer than we had dared to think . . . To put the hope of eternity in our eyes . . . To tell us that the manger is never empty for those who return to it . . . And you will find with Him, I know, a happiness which you will never find alone . . .

O. P. Kretzmann
Christmas Garlands

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